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CANAAN

CANAAN

BY

GRAÇA ARANHA

OF THE BRAZILIAN ACADEMY

TRANSLATED FROM THE PORTUGUESE BY

MARIANO JOAQUIN LORENTE

WITH A PREFACE BY

GUGLIELMO FERRERO

BOSTON

THE FOUR SEAS COMPANY

1920

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First printing, January
Second printing, January
Third printing, January

The Four Seas Press
Boston, Mass., U. S. A.

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PREFACE

AMONG the American* cities that have rapidly developed on the Atlantic coast during the nineteenth century, Rio de Janeiro has a character all its own. You cannot compare it to Buenos Aires or New York. Built on a bay, the beauty of which can neither be imagined nor described, upon hills and mountains covered with immense, marvelous forests which form, among its houses, gardens of incomparable beauty, Rio de Janeiro is a gigantic city, full of life and animation. But you cannot see there the crowds, the bustle and the violent activity of other great American cities. It is the only American metropolis that seems to invite you, not to act, but to loaf, to think, and even to dream. It is not surprising, therefore, that this capital of a powerful federation of extensive and rich states, though they are sparsely populated, should be the center of a flourishing intellectual life. Novelists, poets, critics, historians and philosophers—for the most part government employes—go thither and work, meeting from time to time at the Brazilian Academy. They foregather, between four and five in the afternoon, in a huge bookstore in the Rua Ouvidor. This bookstore belongs to the French firm of

*Needless to say, Signor Ferrero uses the terms "America" and "American," not with the narrow sense given these words in the United States, but meaning the whole American continent and whatever pertains thereto.

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Garnier, and the latest publications from Europe are received there every week. Stimulated by a cosmopolitan culture in which all shades of European intellectuality are represented, the literary production of Brazil has become quite considerable both as to quantity and quality. Naturally, all of it is not first class; but among mediocre works, such as are to be found in any literature, Brazilian literature counts some productions which would honor any country in the old world.

One of these works, and perhaps the most remarkable, is a novel; its title is "Canaan" and its author is Joseph Graça Aranha. The personality of the author, and the work itself, equally deserve the attention of cultivated people. Aranha, a writer and diplomat descended from an old family, truly represents the intellectual classes of the great American nations which Europe seems to have great difficulty in distinguishing from the crowd of noisy *parvenus* and newly-rich. His is an extremely fine mind, endowed with a remarkable force of intuition and on which all the cultures of Europe—French as well as German and English—have exerted their influence. He has not merely read and studied books, but has come into contact with life in some of the great problems of mankind. He was one of the favorite disciples of Baron de Rio Branco—the famous Secretary for Foreign Affairs of the Confederation—and served for a long time in the office of that department at Rio de Janeiro. He accompanied Mr. Nabuco, as secretary, when the latter was sent to Rome in a mission to present before the king of Italy the case for Brazil in the boundary question with British Guiana of which the Italian monarch was chosen arbitrator. He was for some time Brazilian

Minister at Christiania and was afterwards appointed Plenipotentiary for his country at The Hague. This post he relinquished in November, 1914, and returned to Brazil where he was one of the leaders in the anti-German agitation which finally brought Brazil into line with the Allies and the United States. He, therefore, knows Europe and the two Americas, yet he has remained a thorough Brazilian, passionately fond of his country, its history, its natural beauties, its traditions. His duties as a diplomat and as a public functionary have not prevented him from writing many books, of which "Canaan" is the most beautiful.

With such a thorough preparation as the author had, his book could not be merely a novel of individual psychology. "Canaan," therefore, is more than that; it is a novel of contemporary America. Its characters live and act in the midst of an historical phenomenon which no writer, to my knowledge, had yet chosen as a subject for a work of art. This historical phenomenon is the great drama which is being acted on the other side of the Atlantic, in all the countries, north as well as south. It is the encounter of the races, the mixing of cultures, the disturbance caused in the social organization of all the American countries by the masses of men arriving from overcrowded Europe. The history of individuals has, therefore, in this volume a profound social and philosophic significance. A young German, disgusted with Europe and its old civilization—full of violences, lies and ill-concealed abominations—emigrates to Brazil, to the state of Espirito Santo, which is one of the most fertile in tropical Brazil. Everyone knows that in several states of Brazil there exist German colonies which

have preserved almost intact their language and national traditions.

The young emigrant wants to settle in one of these colonies. The son of a college professor, and brought up in an idealistic and anarchistic philosophy, he seeks in the New World, in the midst of populations devoted to tilling the land, a simpler, more moral, more sincere, a freer and happier society than the one he has left behind in Europe. And the book begins with a description of his journey on horseback from Queimado to Porto do Cachoeiro, where he intends to obtain a piece of virgin forest in order to clear it and plant coffee.

Those who have traveled in tropical America will not read without intense emotion the pages in which the Brazilian landscape is described with powerful and rich images. But the subtlety of the author's psychological analysis is not inferior to the beauty of his descriptions. The young emigrant arrives; he obtains from the Brazilian official in charge of the distribution of land, the piece of virgin forest which he desires; he begins his new existence in a world which he believes to be young and, therefore, exempt from all the evils accumulated by history in the old civilizations. But little by little he discovers in this young world the cruelties, the lies and the immoralities which he believed he had left behind in the other hemisphere, when he expatriated himself; he finds the same narrowness and rigidity in the laws; the men of wealth and power exhibit the same tendency to abuse them; in their relations to each other, men display the same hypocrisy and the same spirit of egotism.

The trial for infanticide of a young girl, wrongly accused, lets loose in the colony one of those floods of

delirious hate and collective cruelty which seem at times to rehabilitate the crime and the criminal that brought them forth. In the midst of the forests where he thought he would find the sweet calm of a pure and serene life, this idealistic philosopher is compelled to witness, heart-rent and helpless, the eternal drama of the justice of man seeking to purify the world by exciting the worst and most violent passions of which the human soul is capable. Gradually, the dreamer discovers in the country he had thought young all the symptoms of a dying world: immense lands, exhausted for want of cultivation; old families disappearing; traditions, the traditions of old Brazil, lost in the avalanche of invading new races; the struggle of an old society, refusing to die, and a new society trying to occupy its place.

The critics will judge the literary merits of this novel. As a literary amateur, I will point out among its qualities the beauty of its style and its descriptions, the purity of the psychological analysis, the depth of the thoughts and reflections of which the novel is full, and among its faults a certain disproportion between the different parts of the book and an ending which is too vague, indefinite and unexpected. But its literary qualities seem to me to be of secondary importance to the profound and incontrovertible idea that forms the kernel of the book. Here in Europe, we are accustomed to say that modern civilization develops itself in America more freely than in Europe, for in the former country it has not to surmount the obstacle of an older society, firmly established, as is the case in the latter. Because of this, we call America "the country of the young," and we consider the New

World as the great force which decomposes the old European social organization.

But those who know America are perfectly well aware that such an opinion is but an illusion, due to distance. In Argentina, as in Brazil and in the United States, this civilization which we in Europe call "Americanism" and whose principal aim is to exploit extensive and sparsely populated territories, develops itself only at the expense of an older society, more conservative and more attached to traditions. Everywhere there is an old America struggling against a new one and, this is very curious, the new America, which upsets traditions, is formed above all by European immigrants who seek a place for themselves in the country of their adoption, whereas the real Americans represent the conservative tendencies. Europe exerts on American society—through its emigrants—the same dissolving action which America exerts—through its novelties and its example—on the old civilization of Europe. The protagonist of "Canaan" says so, at one time, in a beautiful passage which expresses the philosophy of the whole book: "It is probable that our fate will be to transform this country from top to bottom, to substitute with another civilization all the culture, religion and traditions of a people. It is a new conquest, slow, dour, peaceful in its means, but terrible in its ambitious schemes. It is necessary that the substitution be so pure and luminous that upon it may not fall the bitter curse of devastation. In the meantime we are a dissolvent of the race of this country. We soak into the nation's clay and soften it; we mix ourselves with the natives, kill their traditions and spread confusion among them . . . No one understands anyone else; there is a

confusion of tongues; men, coming from everywhere, bring with them the shadows of their several gods . . . "

None of the books on America that I am acquainted with make one realize so clearly this phenomenon as this profoundly truthful book. For this reason, "Canaan" must be considered as the novel of contemporary America. The little drama which Mr. Aranha has located in a small town of the state of Espirito Santo, the bitter and truceless struggle between old Brazil and the European immigrants, is the drama of all America at this particular historical moment when America is being Europeanized and Europe is being Americanized. And it is not surprising that an American nurtured in the old culture of Europe, should have been inspired by this historical phenomenon to create a beautiful work of art.

GUGLIELMO FERRERO.

CANAAN

CANAAN

CHAPTER I.

MILKAU rode quietly the tired horse he had hired to take him from Queimado to the city of Porto do Cachoeiro, in Espirito-Santo.

The eyes of the immigrant rested on the peaceful uniformity of the landscape. In that region the earth expresses a perfect harmony of all its parts. The river is neither large and awe inspiring, nor terrifying and tumultuous. The mountains are not like those that thrust their heads into the clouds with a fascinating attraction, inspiring to some dark cult or inviting towards death, as if to a tempting shelter . . .The Santa Maria is a child of the heights, sprightly at its beginning. Then, hindered for a long distance by stones which force it into falls and from which it extricates itself with a mighty effort, it regains its accustomed speed and becomes playful and joyous. It flees through a little wood and insinuates itself into the bosom of the round soft hills which seem to look on its pranks benevolently . . . The hills rise gracefully, covered with short grass that falls along their sides like a yellowish tunic. At that moment the solitude formed by the river and hills was peaceful and bright. There was nothing in it to indicate anguish and terror.

Absorbed in the contemplation of the landscape, Milkau let his horse go at an indolent and broken pace. The loose reins fell on the neck of the animal, who moved his head lazily up and down and now and again lowered his eyelids over his watery eyes. There was a lazy abandon in their movements, a languid trailing through the peacefulness of the landscape. The humble noises of Nature contributed to the voluptuous sensation of silence.

The gentle breeze, the murmuring of the river, the voices of the little insects, all made the broken immobility of things more soothing and more profound. The unceasing noises of life, the perturbing movement which creates and destroys, was interrupted here. Even the rising sun appeared quietly from the calmness of the night, and its rays had no power to disturb the quietude of the earth. Milkau fell into a deep and consoling meditation. He who does not enjoy an absolute repose does not live within himself. In the turmoil, Milkau's voice had modulated accents which he could not perceive. To-day in the solitude, he was frightened by the disturbing sensation which emanated from his sore and excited nerves. All eternal, and beautiful, and holy creations of the soul and the heart are engendered by the mysterious and fertile forces of silence . . .

In front of the immigrant rode his little guide, son of the stableman at Queimado. The lad, very much bored by the journey and his companion, allowed himself to be carried along by the old horse. At times he uttered some word which was lost in the air; again, as a diversion, he scolded his mount, spurring him into a broken gallop. At such moments Milkau viewed the lad with compassion,

full of regret at the sight of the skinny and bony creature, miserable offspring of a race that was dying out in the dumb and unconscious suffering of a species that never arrive at a blossoming period, or the full expansion of individuality. The traveler, coming out of his deep reverie, called to the lad:

"Do you always come to Cachoeiro?"

"Ah! . . . " exclaimed the boy, as if scared at the sound of a human voice. "I come when we have customers. I came the day before yesterday, but for a long time before there was no one from Victoria. Besides, it has rained such a lot lately! . . . "

"Which do you like better: your house or the city?"

"The city, sir!"

"All you have to do is to accompany travelers to Cachoeiro, isn't it?" continued Milkau in his questioning, which pleased the boy.

The lad replied pertly:

"Oh! no, sir."

"What else do you do, then?"

"We help our father . . . Sometimes we go to the fishing grounds to haul in the nets. To-day we had just returned when you arrived . . . Just a few fishes . . . Only four . . . The river is very low. Uncle Francis says it is because the water is very cold, but Aunt Rita says that as the moon is full, the mother of the waters will not allow the fishes to come out. The best thing to do is to fish with explosives, but the officials won't allow it, and the people have to waste their labor for nothing."

"Have you any meat at Queimado?"

"Ah! yes, sir. There is dry meat in my father's store,

but it is for the customers. We eat only fish, and when there is none, we drink *mingao* . . . "

They continued on their way inland.

The landscape had not changed in general design. The sun had hardly begun to brighten up the atmosphere. Milkau surveyed his little guide with kindly eyes; the lad smiled gratefully, opening his colorless lips and showing a set of greenish teeth, sharp as those of a saw. His emaciated face was illumined with the sweet resignation of his race.

"How much further have we to go, my son?" asked the traveler.

"More than half way. We can't see yet the ranch of Samambaia, and from there to the city is as far as from Queimado to the ranch."

"Must you return home right away, or will you take a rest? Will you stay until the afternoon?"

"Oh! sir. My father ordered me to go back at once. To-day I must go with my mother to gather wood, and after I have taken care of the animals, I must mend the net which Uncle Joseph Francis' boat tore this morning. And to-night, before the rising of the moon, we go to cast the nets, for if the water be warm there will be a good catch . . . That's what my father said."

The kindly immigrant could see in the unfortunate boy's nine years the astounding precocity often exhibited by the children of the wretched. The youngster, excited by the conversation, straightened upon his horse, gathered up the reins firmly, tightened his bony legs against the sides of his mount, and started the animal at a sharp trot. Milkau instinctively followed the boy's example,

and thus the pair of them—a temporary partnership of pity and misery—advanced along the road.

Shortly afterwards, in a bend of the way, the boy stretched one hand forward and, turning his face back, said to his companion:

"We have arrived at Samambaia."

There, on top of a hill, a brownish building was hardly discernible in the ashen blue of the horizon. As Milkau advanced, the view became narrower, and the hill so concealed the road that it seemed as if the latter, by a supreme effort, had stretched itself to die at its foot. The travelers were skirting, now a coffee plantation on the hillside, now one of manioc, in the low lying lands. The land was worn out and the plantations were poor. The coffee plants lacked the dark-green color which indicates a healthy sap, and, instead, were colored with a light green which shone under the golden rays of the sun. The manioc plants, thin and delicate, waved as if they had no roots and the wind would carry them away. The sun was clearing up the sky and the air was filled with the songs of the river and the birds, that seemed to prolong the dawn. On contemplating that land, exhausted but smiling, one felt a sad mixture of discouragement and bitter pleasure. The land there was dying like some beautiful woman, still young, and with a smile on her discolored face, but exhausted for the toils of life and barren for the pleasures of love.

Milkau and his guide reached a gate which closed the road where it enters the lands of Samambaia. The lad pushed the gate open with one hand, and the hinges gave a discordant screech. Then Milkau entered, and the gate closed itself with a dull thud. The road, after entering

the lands of Samambaia, described a wide curve which embraced the vale and approached the bank of the river. It was muddy, sticky and wet, full of ruts made by ox-drawn carts, and it gave forth a stench of loam and dung. Uphill the land was uncultivated and covered with wild grasses. Here and there a few oxen, shaking with the restless movement of their heads the bells they carried at their necks, browsed along, puffing and pulling impatiently at the grass. The hides of the poor beasts closely followed the lines of their skeletons. A few birds kept them company, anums of ill omen that lighted on the decrepit backs of the oxen, shrieking like the trumpeters of death.

When Milkau arrived before the house, he let go the reins and began to look around. The house he was observing was big and low, with no windows, but with an immense piazza around it into which opened some ill-fitting and paintless doors. The house had been painted white but had become dark, with an uneven brown color; here and there the moss had traced curious, fantastic designs on the walls; there was a stair from the piazza which lacked several steps and had had the hand-rail torn from it; in front, the grass grew in big tufts, hardly disturbed by the paths which led from the house to the road and in several other directions. On one side there was a chapel—built a good many years before—guarding in its silence the voice of devotion which had some time sounded there, converted now into an unknown and mysterious reliquary of antique images of saints, ingenuous beauties, perhaps, of a primitive, simple and religious art. Inside the little church, and guarded by the divinities therein imprisoned, lay in the sacred ground the remains

of masters and slaves rendered equal by death and oblivion . . .

Milkau's horse went on at a slow pace. The guide yawned with indifference, and lifting one leg, crossed it over the saddle with a gesture of resignation. Turning towards the house, he saw a man advancing to the rail of the piazza, and recognizing him, said lazily to his companion:

"There you have Colonel Affonso."

Milkau saluted courteously, taking off his hat; the man above answered by lazily lifting his straw hat. The master of the ranch, barefooted, in a pair of cotton trousers and a soft shirt, appeared to be very old, judging by his white beard; and the whiteness of his skin bore witness to the purity of his blood. His face was sad, as if he were conscious that responsibility for the misfortunes of his race and family fell upon him; his look was empty, like an idiot's, betraying no interest whatever in life's activities. It seemed as though the exhaustion of his faculties, emotions and sensations, was complete, and had brought him to the miserable condition of an automaton. But, in spite of this, he represented a human figure, the superior life, which tangled up in the *débâcle* of its surroundings, had been dragged along into the general ruin. And there is no sadder picture than that in which the action of time, the force of destruction, does not confine itself to traditions and inanimate things, but envelopes human beings in the catastrophe, striking and paralysing them, and increasing the painful situation to an infinite melancholy.

Almost at the edge of the road was the mill where flour was prepared. It was a ramshackle building,

covered with blackened, broken tiles on which green moss grew, a thick forest in miniature. Inside the building stood the fly-wheel, a silent reminder of days when grain had been ground, and, beside it, the wheel where in slavery times the manioc was grated. There were also two pots where the flour was now mixed by the rudimentary process of paddles. They were made of brass and therein differed from the rest of the machinery scattered on the floor,—tubes, boilers, cogwheels—showing that there had been there an excellent installation which man, falling from degeneration into degeneration and losing all the varnish of an artificial civilization, had abandoned in his decadence for primitive appliances which harmonized better with the brutish condition into which his spirit had fallen.

Milkau proceeded along the road, compassing with his eyes the picture of that miserable ranch. The figure of the colonel remained stationary upstairs, presiding with his vacant stare over the silent disintegration of those remains of culture and awaiting in a mournful attitude the slow invasion of the jungle which, in triumphal revenge, was gradually circumscribing man and things human . . .

The travelers continued to move along this landscape in which the forces of life seemed to have been paralyzed, and where everything had the rigidity and perfection of immobility when, turning to the right, they came almost suddenly upon a native ranch. It was a miserable dwelling built cross-like, thatched with straw that projected irregularly beyond the walls. The little guide went up to the house instinctively, as if impelled by the force of habit. Leaning against a pillar an old mulatto of cloudy eyes looked vaguely into space. He wore a threadbare

pair of trousers; his body was naked and his tanned skin covered the mighty structure of an athlete; on his chest, as if it were the dying trunk of a tree, grew a whitish, curly down which covered him up to the neck and there became a rather thin beard. His attitude was one of primitive adoration, of never ending astonishment at the splendor and glory of the world.

On the threshold was sitting a young mulatto woman. She seemed indolence personified. Her unkempt hair stuck out of her head like horns; her skirt hung carelessly over her emaciated bosom and her flaccid breasts fell loosely on her belly. Standing beside her, a little negro, with no other wearing apparel than a string round his neck, from which hung an amulet of dough and a picture of Solomon, gazed intently at the new arrivals.

Milkau saluted the group and they let him come forward without betraying the least emotion. The old man, answering the salute, merely said:

"Get off your horse, young man."

"No, thank you. I am in a hurry . . . "

"Well, sir, from here to Cachoeiro is only a little bit. Look . . . In two turns of the river you are in the city."

Then the old man, as if reflecting for a minute and feeling a desire for sociability, insisted that Milkau should get off his horse. The guide waited no longer, and slipping from the saddle, he left his own horse alone and went over to hold the reins of the other horse while Milkau alighted. When he was on his feet, Milkau yawned with restful satisfaction.

The foreigner grasped the rough horny hand of the old man, who opened his lips in an ungainly effort at a smile, showing his red, toothless gums. The young

woman did not budge; scarcely moving her eyes, she cast on the traveler a glance full of laziness and discouragement. The child cuddled up against her, open-mouthed, the saliva running from its thick lips.

From the door, Milkau could see the interior of the dwelling. The roof was high in the middle and pitched so sharply towards the sides that at the walls a man could not stand upright; the furnishings, simple and mean, consisted of a tobacco-colored hammock rolled up and hooked on the wall, a mat made of rushes spread on the floor, two low stools, an oar, reels of fishing tackle, and a few agricultural implements. A small straw partition, like a screen, enclosed a corner, forming a little room where one could see another mat and a fowling piece. At the back, a door opened into a clearing in the forest in which grew a group of banana plants; and near the door, some black stones, mixed up with pieces of charred wood, betrayed the kitchen.

"Have you lived here long?" asked Milkau.

"I was born and I grew up in this countryside, young gentleman . . .There, near Mangahary"—And he extended his hand towards the river. "Do you see a big house, away back? It is there I grew into a man, in the ranch of Captain Mattos, now dead. The Lord have mercy on his soul!"

Following the hand with his eyes, the foreigner could faintly see a heap of ruins which interrupted the verdure of the forest. The conversation continued through a series of questions from Milkau as to the former conditions of life in the region, to which the old man answered with pleasure, for such questions gave him a chance to talk of times gone by. Like most primitive

and simple people, he was incapable of assuming the initiative in a conversation. He related in broken phrases the story of his sad life. All of it was a pathetic drama, without action, without adventures, but full of an intense and profound agony! He spoke of the old house full of slaves, of the simple festivities, of the labors, of the punishments . . . And in his rough dialect he murmured, as if in ecstasy, his sorrowful recollections.

"Ah! All that, my young gentleman, is gone . . . Where is the ranch? My late master died. His son continued to live there until the government deprived him of his slaves. Everything went to pieces. The master went to Victoria, where he has a job; my mates went into the forest and each built a house here, there and everywhere, just where they pleased. I, with my people, came here, to the colonel's land. Things are sad now. The government finished up the ranches and flung us into the world to look for something to eat, to get something to dress with and to work like oxen in order to live. Ah! those were good times at the ranch! We all worked together. Some gathered coffee, some husked corn, all together, good people, mulatto women, kids . . . Who cared for the foreman? . . . A whipping never killed anyone. There was always plenty of food, and on Saturday, Sunday's eve, the old drum used to beat until the early morning . . ."

In this fashion the former slave went on mixing, in the bitterness of his nostalgia, recollections of the pleasures of the communal life of yesterday, protected by the paternal influence of the ranch, with the despair of the present isolation and the melancholy of a world gone to pieces.

"But, my friend," said Milkau, "at least you are living on what is your own. You have your own house, your own land. You are your own master."

"My land; my . . . nothing! The house belongs to the husband of that daughter of mine sitting right there. The land belongs to the colonel and is rented for ten thousand reis per year. Nowadays everything belongs to the foreigner; the government does nothing for the Brazilians; everything is for the Germans . . ."

The old negro trembled with emotion and stared blankly into space. He went on with his monologue:

"Are you going to settle here, sir? In a year you will be stinking with money. I have seen your countrymen arrive here with their pockets absolutely empty and their hands hanging by their sides . . . And now . . . they all have a house, a coffee plantation, a herd of mules . . . The government has taken everything from the Brazilians, ranches, horses, negroes . . . The only thing they did not take from us is the grace of God."

And his sad eyes grew darker and darker. The fog that covered them became more dense, as if made thicker by the sorrowful vision of his native land conquered by the invading hordes of foreigners.

There followed an oppressive silence. Milkau perceived the echo of this complaint of the eternal slave, the ill-defined resignation of the underdog. There was something pitiful in that protest, and the inability to give it a free and elevated expression served to increase the old man's agony. He continued to shake his head, trying at the same time to repress the sobs that shook his frame. The daughter, with her sinister indolence, increased the oppressiveness which seemed to weigh everything

down . . . Milkau had a choking sensation, as if the weight of responsibility for the fate of these wretches fell upon him. He searched in vain within himself for a suitable sentiment and for consoling words in which to express it. He found nothing. With a forced smile he bade these people farewell.

"Goodbye, old man! See you again."

The negro gave him his hand. The rest of the family remained motionless, stupefied.

Milkau continued his journey in the bright light of the morning, which had now reached its full glory. The wind blew a little stronger, waking things from sleep into life again. The river flowed in a direction opposite to that followed by the travelers, and these contrary motions gave the impression that all the landscape was animated and filing past the eyes of the horseman. The ranch perched on the summit was gradually disappearing in the horizon, and the immigrant watched the panorama passing gently by: settler's dwellings, men, everything slipped along slowly and quietly, but impelled by an irresistible force which allowed nothing to stand still.

The road stretched far away. Other roads met it here and there, unknown, numberless, uncertain as are the paths of man on earth. The cool breeze blew gently along between the opposite ranges of hills, which run parallel to the river, and brought to the ear of the traveler the rumbling of a waterfall. The Santa Maria river, throwing itself like a madman against the rocks, thundered with increasing volume, and its turbulent waters reflected the light of the sun as from a shaky mirror. Milkau saw, far away, in the forest still reeking

with fog, a large white stain. In front of him, the guide, stretching forth his arm, shouted:

"Porto do Cachoeiro!"

Milkau, as if waking from a dream, breathed heavily. His body shook with the excitement of a man who at last sets foot on a longed-for land; his blood, coursing rapidly through his veins, seemed to salute the city; his nerves, his will, seemed to transmit an active energy to his lazy horse. The animal, as if transformed by the cool breeze and the sight of familiar places which marked the end of his journey, dilated his nostrils, snorted, shook his mane, arched his neck and broke into a quick gallop.

Then, ascending a small height which dominated the city, hemmed in between hills and the Santa Maria river, Milkau looked at the landscape around him. Flooded by sunlight, with its houses in all the glory of color, vibrating with the music of the waterfall from which the river escaped in a silvery ribbon, the little city seemed at that moment the daughter of the sun and the waters.

The travelers hurried on. They had already reached the first houses, miserable dwellings that seemed to have come out on the highway to welcome strangers. Watching them closely, Milkau noticed that they were inhabited by negroes—the descendants of the slaves—and he imagined them squeezed out by the invasion of the whites, but still seeking the scattering and feeble rays of social heat, and squatting at the threshold of the city which was foreign and forbidden to them.

The travelers descended the slope and came to a gate which the guide opened to let Milkau through. They slackened their pace on entering the city.

"Where do they get off, boss?" asked the solicitous guide.

"At the house of Mr. Robert Schultz. Do you know him?"

"Certainly, of course. Who doesn't . . . Biggest house in the city . . . Last Sunday I took a young fellow there."

The horses were panting and their gait was broken, making the riders feel as though they were descending some rocky slope. The horses' sides were covered with thick, soapy foam, and with their reins hanging on their necks, they stumbled on the loose stones of the street.

Milkau was suffering from the visual confusion due to a brusque change of scenery; his eyes could not retain any one image, and on his retina there was but the vague impression of a small German city in the midst of a tropical forest. To the mind of the immigrant came the confused and feeble remembrance of "auld lang syne" as he saw the white city shining in the golden rays of the sun.

They arrived before a large building and the guide alighted and helped Milkau to get off. They bade each other good-bye, and no sooner had Milkau entered the store than the boy was away with the horses. The establishment of Robert Schultz was very large. It had four doors to the street, while innumerable and varied merchandise gave it an air of great size and opulence. There, one could deal in everything: lands, wines, agricultural implements, coffee. It was one of those colonial stores which are an epitome of commerce and which, amidst the profusion and multiplicity of merchandise, manage to preserve a trace of order and harmony.

The store was at that hour full of people, and Milkau had to make his way to the counter through a host of

customers standing huddled together, a crowd of hesitating, heavy, slow-moving Germans.

They told Schultz that a traveler was looking for him, and immediately Milkau was shown to a desk where a full-bearded, bull-necked man received him. The immigrant gave him a letter of introduction which the man proceeded to read, interrupting himself now and then to take a look at the stranger. There was in the eyes of Milkau a soft light, an overpowering calmness which disturbed the old merchant, who read and looked at the immigrant thoughtfully and with evident displeasure. Finally he folded up the letter carefully and began to rattle his fingers on the desk.

"Well, then," he commenced, just to say something, "You intend to settle here, do you?"

Milkau answered affirmatively and Schultz advised him not to come to any decision until he had taken a good look at things himself.

"This is a miserable and wretched hole. You will get sick of it, I assure you . . . Perhaps it would be better for you to go to Rio or S. Paulo. There, yes . . . Those are great commercial centres where you would easily find a job. The colony is a fraud; you used to be able to earn some money, but now business is pretty poor . . . "

"But . . . " interrupted Milkau.

Schultz paid no attention and continued his harangue, trying to set Milkau's mind against Cachoeiro.

"In my opinion, you should certainly go back this very day. We are full of people. Here in my own house, I have so many employes that I am going to dismiss some of them. You won't be able to find employment in one single house in the colony. What's the use of trying to

do business nowadays with so many taxes, the poor rate of exchange and the exactions of the politicians? . . . For here, in spite of being foreigners, or perhaps for that very reason, we are the ones who support the different political parties in the state. The elections will soon be here; the bosses will arrive from Victoria, and we have to house them, feast them and round up the voters for them. Now, all this is making us poor. What we earn is but a mere trifle compared to the extra expenses . . . "

"But I didn't come here with the intention of starting in business," ejaculated the traveler.

"What's that? Do you intend to go in for coffee? . . ."

And Schultz did not conceal his surprise at finding a colonist in an immigrant who was far too well dressed to be a simple farmer.

"Ah! that's a different story," continued the merchant in more friendly tones. "There's nothing like tilling the soil. Go to the jungle, fix up your ranch, and in a short time you will be rich. And . . . don't forget. Our store is entirely at your service. We will supply you with everything you need, and as soon as you can, you send us your coffee. That's the way we do it here: we are paid in kind . . . which is a great advantage to the colonist," he added, slightly lowering his eyes. "You have arrived at an excellent opportunity to purchase a lot in the new lands at Doce river, which are just being opened up to the immigrants. The land commissioner has just had the notice put up for the survey and sale. The surveyor, Mr. Felicissimo, is in Porto do Cachoeiro, on his way to the lands. He is a gay spark who always pays us a

visit. You know, he is a regular customer here and belongs to our party."

Milkau thanked the merchant for his offer and was getting ready to set out in search of lodgings, when Schultz called him back.

"Don't bother looking for a hotel. You'd better stay with us. We have plenty of rooms for guests, as usual . . . Besides, you can be very useful to me now as company for a young man, also of an important family, who just arrived yesterday . . . Imagine . . . a son of General von Lentz. The youth seems sad and taciturn. I don't know what can be the matter with him . . . Maybe he is ashamed of having immigrated . . . Ah! those boys . . . "

And with a malicious smile, he stood up and begged Milkau to follow him. The latter was almost smothered by the attentions and courtesies bestowed on the prospective customer. They went from one end of the counter to the other, where the staircase led to the floor above. Milkau's eyes were blinded by the strong light of the morning. At the door of the store an old woman with a crooked nose and parched face was just arriving on her mule. She was seated between two bags that hung from hooks in the saddle. A drove of donkeys passed along the street, laden with coffee baskets and shaking their bells.

A young man was busy writing in the room which Milkau and Schultz entered. He stood up to greet them.

"I am bringing you a companion," announced the master of the house, "a countryman of ours who wishes to settle at Doce river . . . "

And turning toward Milkau, he told him to make himself perfectly at home, and asked him about his baggage. Milkau explained that he had sent everything by the canoe and that it would arrive in the evening. Schultz then left the two immigrants alone.

"Please don't interrupt your work on my account," said Milkau politely.

"Not at all. What I was doing is in no particular hurry. I was just killing time."

And they began to talk about trifles, about the journey, the weather, the country. While they were talking, Milkau was admiring the nobility of young von Lentz's features and did not tire of observing the lustre of his fiery eyes, which dominated a beardless face of strong, sharp lines, and which protruded from a big, solid head like that of a Roman patrician. But at the same time that he felt this sudden enthusiasm for the sculptural lines of the young figure, Milkau experienced a certain disappointment at finding in these strange lands the son of a German general—a privileged being in their own country—escaped, as it were, from his own great world to come and bury in the mystery of the colonies his burden of disappointments, despair, and anguish . . .

In a few moments the new arrivals found themselves in the big dining room of the employes of the store, and took their places at the table. The room was absolutely bare; the walls, merely whitewashed, were devoid of any design. The servants, as machine-like as soldiers, waited on the host of employes eating in silence. In all the faces of these men, so different from each other, some old and wrinkled, others young, with a perpetual adolescence, there was the imprint of a determination to fulfil

some practical duty, to move forward in the harmonious ensemble of a single unit. Milkau could read in this gathering of Germans the provincial and military character which is the very basis of a tenacity and obedience that have reduced all that their race ever possessed in the way of moral elevation and beauty into an overpowering monotony. Where was that sacred Germany, that land of individualism, that sweet asylum of free genius? Milkau asked himself the question amidst the racket of the meal, while he watched the company of blonde men. And meditating on the German soul, he thought that the solution of the enigma could only be found in images and obscure expressions, in the vague symbolisms of metaphysics. "Who knows," he continued to soliloquize, as if in a dream, "who knows but that some day two dissimilar spirits found themselves in one body: one of them servile to matter, ambitious, greedy, trying to overpower the other as it flew far above, oblivious of gods and men, creating purely and without any foul intercourse, in the placid regions of the ideal, the figures of poetry and of dreams. And who knows how hard and how bitter was the struggle between those two forces? . . . There was one moment when the fiend from the earth vanquished the spirit of beauty and of freedom, and the body is now at peace, without anxieties, without struggles, like a herd of slaves eating up the remains of their past genius, a divine food whence comes the light which now guides it in its mournful and devastating march through the earth . . . "

The repast finished, the employes filed out in order. Milkau and Lentz went out leisurely, like people who had nothing to do. Back in the room, they decided to visit

the city, and when a few moments afterwards they were passing through the store, Schultz called them.

"We have with us Mr. Felicissimo, who is going to make the survey at Doce river the day after to-morrow."

And as he spoke he pointed to a slender man, small and swarthy, with a triangular face pitted with small-pox, his head flat, like a hawk, and a pair of black eyes that shone like two burning coals.

"Mr. Milkau," said Schultz, "has just arrived and he intends to secure a lot. I explained to him a short while ago that the best lots are at Doce river, and you will do me a great favor by giving him one in the best possible location."

"Why, of course!" exclaimed the solicitous surveyor, opening his arms as if he wanted to embrace someone. "To-morrow morning, without fail, I'm going to join my gang at Santa Theresa. The day after to-morrow, very early in the morning, we set off, and then, about eleven o'clock, we shall camp at the port of Inga, at Doce river . . . When are the gentlemen coming?"

Lentz looked embarrassed for an instant, and then replied half-heartedly:

"Where to, the country? . . . I haven't made up my mind yet what I shall do in the colony . . . A good deal depends on Mr. Schultz . . . "

The merchant shook his head, and in a solemn tone, though somewhat subdued, as if he were appealing to the testimony of those present, he said:

"Mr. von Lentz prefers a situation in the city, in business . . . But Mr. Felicissimo can tell you how hard it is to secure one . . . All the business houses are full and the

time is rather unfavorable . . . Let us wait a while . . . let us wait a while . . . "

Felicissimo asked Milkau when he intended to start.

"I'm only asking so as to make the necessary arrangements and avoid any delays when we get there. The business is quite simple. You want a lot, and the land commissioner, who is somewhere near Gandu, gives it to you, but we don't require his assistance to make the survey. Besides, I am authorized to do everything in his absence. I can even grant lots to the colonists, who can start work right away . . . We are not very fussy in doing things . . . There are no formalities . . . Everything is settled, legalized, afterwards. Only one thing is absolutely necessary, and that is to pay the fees at once . . . "

Milkau interrupted him to ask about the journey.

"How many leagues is it from here to Santa Theresa?"

"Five. And from there to Doce river, another five. The gentleman should go from here to the heights of Santa Theresa, stop there for the night, and continue the next day to Doce river."

"Do we need a guide?"

"No . . . You can't lose your way . . . The road is quite frequented . . . "

Schultz offered to send the immigrant with some drovers who went that way every day. Milkau thanked him without accepting the offer.

Leaving Schultz behind, they went out into the street. Felicissimo, who said he had nothing to do in the meantime, offered to accompany the strangers by way of killing time in a pleasant fashion.

Porto do Cachoeiro, scorched by the sun, was visible

to the immigrants in its full extent. The city consisted of two parts united by a bridge. Only one part, the one on the left, seemed to be flourishing; the other consisted of a few houses which lined the bank of the river. Not a garden relieved the austerity of the dwellings, no orchard adorned the roads, no trees sheltered the streets with their shadows. For the first time, perhaps, the settlers in the tropics were unacquainted with the pleasure of keeping domestic animals or cultivating plants and flowers. A strict and systematic barrenness seemed stamped on the facades of the houses, which were merely the dwellings of a tribe of merchants. In the street, Milkau tried to guess at the moral meaning of the place and he was disturbed by a feeling of anguish caused by the white sterility of the city, for it seemed to him that the foul breath of commerce had killed the natural grace and poetry of this privileged corner of the earth where the merchants had established nefarious temples to speculation. Felicissimo walked hurriedly, relating the miracles wrought by fortune with these merchants.

"This tall building here," he said, pointing to a narrow house similar to all the others in the street," belongs to Frederick Bacher, leader of our opponents' party. He is Schultz's rival and enemy. He came here without a penny. To-day, see how wealthy he is! They are all like that here. All of them have piles of money. You might say that the volume of business in Cachoeiro surpasses that of Victoria . . . You never hear of a case of bankruptcy here . . . These Germans certainly have an eye for business . . . Had they been Brazilians everything would have gone to the dogs."

And the surveyor continued in the same vein, praising

to the skies the Germanic virtues for business and economy, their ease for assimilation, their energy for work, and pointing out, as a contrast, the inferior qualities of the Brazilians, which he recited with pleasure in his anxiety to appear to his companions superior and just, and yet trying to flatter them at the same time. In order to give himself an air of importance, and pretending to be intimate with the inhabitants, he left Milkau and Lentz from time to time and went into a store to exchange a few words with the owner. Sometimes he managed to get the owner to come to the door with him, and for the edification of the newcomers, allowed himself certain liberties, patting him on the back, poking his ribs and making fun of him by way of a joke, to all of which the complacent German, smiling and getting red in the face, would murmur, as if excusing the surveyor to the others:

"This Mr. Felicissimo is a perfect devil . . . "

The three went along thus, attracting people's attention by the gestures and the high-pitched voice of the surveyor, and looked upon with curiosity by the drovers unloading their beasts and by the customers who thronged the stores. Lentz had no interest whatever in going from house to house in Felicissimo's annoying and vulgar fashion, and in order to avoid this tiresome peregrination he suggested climbing one of the hills which dominate the city, that they might enjoy the view of the surrounding country. The other two agreed and away they went, guided by Felicissimo. In order to reach the most accessible hill, they had to go to the other side of the bridge spanning the waterfall, which deafened them with its incessant roar. The men's footsteps set up a resounding and powerful vibration as if they had been a

troop of cavalry. The hill stood on the other side, and they started to climb by a stony path of loose gravel which made their march irregular and fatiguing. Felicissimo, very agile, went in front. The other two, unused to the heat, walked heavily, bathed in perspiration. As they gradually ascended, the voice of the waterfall died down, the perfume of the mountain plants met them, and the rarefied air seemed to sooth the irritation caused by the heat. At first the perspective was narrow, shut in by a circle of hills. From the summit, however, they dominated a vast, rolling region and the eyes of the foreigners experienced an instant of delicious ecstasy. The curved outline of the mountains covered with thick turf, growing with a variety of colors, the river gliding through the valley, the limpid, dry air, so diaphanous as to offer no obstacle to the sight, the sky covering the earth with a mantle of deep azure, formed an ensemble of light, colors and lines that gave the landscape a look of serene majesty.

Felicissimo was the interpreter of the region. Perfectly acquainted with everything, he gave every place and object its proper title. Milkau stood calmly on the hilltop. He had uncovered his head, and the rays of the sun broke on his hair—fair as a nymph's—and on his bushy beard, with glorious splendor. He was a well-built man, with the soft and rosy skin of a woman, and his powerful eyes, blue as the sky, gathered and absorbed the picture before him. Youth had not abandoned him yet, but in the harmony of the placid lines of his face there was the calmness of maturity, which had begun to arrive.

Felicissimo pointed one by one to different parts of the horizon; the others followed with their eyes his rapid

gestures, and dazed by his garrulity, they could hardly make out the strange and barbaric names which reached their ears, but carefully registered in their minds the impressions caused by the beautiful country. Towards the east lay the district of Queimado, and the long road which crosses it unrolled sinuously, now through an open and smiling plain, now through the green of a sparsely planted wood. Finally it reached the small group of houses which form the port of Mangarahy, on the banks of the Santa Maria, which there flowed proudly and lazily, having freed itself from the waterfalls. Towards the north, south, and west, the mountains, crowded together, looked like big blotches of paint. Here Gandu, over there Santa Theresa, two sombre regions which the colonists are wrenching away from the mysterious silence of the solitude, Along a vale full of sunlight, flowed a rivulet, long and transparent like a bridal veil. Towards the west the Santa Maria hugs the coffee plantations and the farms, and struggles with the black ledges that strive to hold it back.

Milkau could read in that panorama the simple history of this obscure region. Porto do Cachoeiro was the boundary of two worlds that met each other. The one betrayed the past in the sad and angular landscape of the east, where marks of exhaustion branded even the smallest objects. There could be seen ranches in ruins, abandoned dwellings, traces of slave huts, chapels, all perfumed and consecrated by death. The waterfall formed the boundary. On the other side the landscape presented stronger and darker lines. It was a new land, ready to shelter the avalanche of immigrants who came from the old regions of the other hemisphere, avidly seeking

her full warm breasts. Here was to germinate the generation who would some day cover all the land, when the waterfall would no longer divide two worlds, two histories, two races that are fighting each other, one with perfidious lust, the other with timorous energy; and when they will be united in one great creative love.

They descended the mountain and re-entered the city as the stores were being closed, only to be opened again after dinner. At that moment there was great animation in the streets, crowded with people leaving the stores to go home.

"Nearly everybody here seems to be German," remarked Lentz to the surveyor.

"Yes, there are very few Brazilians . . . You might safely say that there are none in business."

"Then, what do the Brazilians do in Cachoeiro?" asked Milkau.

"The Brazilian residents belong to the forum, judges, lawyers, sheriffs. Others are civil servants, tax collectors, post-office officials . . . "

"And teachers?" asked Lentz.

"There is only one; for the language taught in the forest is the German tongue and the teachers are Germans, except in the city . . . We haven't any priests either, nor church, as you must have noticed. It's true there is no need of them because Catholics here are mighty rare, and for the Protestants there are three pastors in the chapels of Luxemburgo, Jequitiba and Altona . . . The Catholics of this district are the people of Queimado, of Mangarahy and other places where the real natives live."

Felicissimo continued to volunteer information about

the place; his companions listened in silence, and he went on talking until they arrived at Schultz's house. The surveyor bade them good-bye, promising to return on the morrow to accompany them in some other excursions.

After dinner, which took place in the same quiet and orderly way as the lunch, the newcomers went upstairs to their room, not feeling any desire to go out and spend the first few hours of the evening at the brewery, across the street, as was the custom of the place. Milkau was tired with the journey and the walk. Lentz felt excited by the emotion of meeting a countryman who, for reasons which he could not well determine, interested and attracted him already.

They sat together near an open window. The calm of the evening brought things in general to a standstill, giving them the restfulness and immobility of a picture. At that hour Nature excelled herself, taking on the serene expression of Art. The early perfumes of the surrounding forests descended to embalm the air, and tenuous shadows began to enshroud the landscape. The two immigrants were lost in silent admiration, and a curious melancholy seemed to murmur to them an explanation of pictures dreamed of but never seen, of the nostalgia of illusions which were now being realized here . . .

"It seems to me that I have seen this picture elsewhere," said Milkau, meditatively. "But no. It can't be. This air, this languid environment, this sudden torpor which one perceives must pass away in a short time . . . no, I have not seen this before."

"And how long are we going to remain here?" asked Lentz, yawning with disappointment, while his eyes wandered lazily over the landscape.

"I don't reckon time," answered Milkau, "for I don't know how long I have to live, and so I hope now that I shall settle here for good. I am an immigrant and my soul longs for rest; this will be my last journey on earth . . . "

"But, have you no ambition? Will nothing drive you from here, from this painful peacefulness which is like the grave for us?"

"I'll stay here. If there be peace here, well, it is precisely peace that I seek . . . I shall live humbly; all I wish around me is complete harmony."

"And is that why you are going to the forest? Would it not be better to stay here in the city and engage in some business?"

"No, I want a tranquil and free life, and business life is tortured by greed and ambition . . . Besides, I think that the only work worthy of man is agriculture in new and fertile countries such as this, and industry in the old continent. A business life, with its rude formalities and low ambitions and with its intermediate position in the social scale, has no attractions for me. I don't feel drawn except to those simple occupations which are better suited to the new order of things that will hold sway in the future . . . And you, have you made up your mind to settle in business?"

"I don't know very well what to do . . . I am undecided, restless. I think that while business might enable me to make a fortune and give me an opportunity for indulging the gambling propensities common to every man, it is, all the same, a low and vile occupation. I am undecided, and were it not for fear of the tedium of the

forest and for the suppression of all excitement, I would perhaps venture to till the land."

The city was sparingly illuminated. There were wide stretches of shadow, but at some points the lights from the street and from the houses fell on the waters of the river, which multiplied them in its quivering mirror. Lentz remained silent. His gaze lost itself in the night as if he were in profound meditation; but his face betrayed lack of serenity and its distorted lines gave it an expression of rancor and restlessness. It seemed as if within himself, in a secret and painful monologue, he was still complaining against his luck, and was struggling in vain within the closed walls of fate in an effort, as of a wounded bird, to soar into the regions of his dream.

Milkau felt sorry for this pitiful silence, and allowing himself to be carried away by his kind nature, he said to his young companion:

"Why not come and work with me at Doce river? Perhaps you would feel happier and more independent there. We can buy one lot together, and as we have no family, we two will form a company and we will help each other . . . And if you should repent, you can go away; for I shall not complain at being left alone, seeing that, so far, that has been my fate . . . "

The words were gentle and kind, and came from the heart. On the lips of Lentz fluttered a smile which showed that the tempestuous sea of his soul had become as calm as a placid lake.

"Yes, we'll see . . Thanks very much . . Why not? . . " he murmured with an emotion which, through pride, he endeavored to conceal.

Milkau rejoiced at the prospect of having a companion

who needed shelter and comfort in his exile. And he was also glad for his own sake; for he felt that his communicative nature would have ample scope in the common life with this youth who appeared to be so intelligent and whose views revealed, at least, an aspiring soul. However, he did not want to press the young immigrant to follow his own fortune. Milkau wanted him to reflect before he decided to accompany him. Lentz's determination to enter the rude, mean life of a store was only half-hearted, and this predisposed him to accept Milkau's proposal, and besides, there was the intellectual attraction of his chance companion. Milkau did not insist. He even delicately changed the subject. He went on to talk of other things.

"Then the country pleases you? Do you like this greenness of spring, the splendor of the sun, the luxurious vegetation?"

"Yes. All this is strong and beautiful, but I prefer the European fields with their changes, their frame of mountains, their well-defined colors."

"Europe," interrupted Milkau, "has a tradition which prevents us from judging aright. Except for traditions, I don't know if the Rhine is worth as much as the Santa Maria which, without legends, without a past, just by its own merits, charms me so much with its wild banks, its limpid waters, its weeping willows . . . "

"Oh! but this pitiless sun! . . . Here there is no place for the transition of colors. Always this yellow color pursues you . . . "

And with a forceful gesture of his hand, Lentz seemed to be trying to remove from his head the obsession of the overpowering light.

"You will soon get used to it, and you will love this country even passionately. I have come from far away and I love it more and more every day."

"Ah! isn't this the first time you have been in the interior of Brazil?"

"In this part, yes . . . Before, I went through Minas Geraes, just after I arrived in the country, when I had an idea of settling there; but I didn't find any facilities and I came here."

"Whereabouts in Minas were you?"

"In the west . . . It was a great journey for me . . . S. Joao d'el Rei gives one a unique impression."

"How is that?" asked Lentz with curiosity.

"Why, it seemed to me there that I had penetrated the unexplored past of Brazil. Oh! it was a happy return to the times which are now past everywhere and which only there seem to continue their course . . . "

Lentz was absorbed in Milkau's words and the latter began to relate his visit to the old mining town. In Cachoeiro there was silence. The lights in the houses had gone out, and the lamps of the street pointed here and there with their light the shadows of the diaphanous night, of the summer night which is merely a brief resting spell for the day. The waterfall continued to roar all the time, but its noises, so even and persistent, went unheeded by Lentz, who was all atttention to Milkau's narrative.

"Then, early in the morning, my sleep—the sleep of a tired traveler—was cut short by the pealing of bells from many churches, which evoked in me a sweet enchantment. As with all men used to the great modern cities, the music of the bells was unknown to me in the power and sonor-

ousness it had that morning; but, nevertheless, that strange music did not hurt my ears, and I listened to it almost in ecstasy, as if it were an old sensation revived again; for it seemed as if it were being understood by a longing soul which awakened within me and took possession of all my being . . . I remained there charmed by the caress of sleep . . . And I dreamt . . . The space was full of sounds, the light mountain air quivered as if it were saturated with music. Nature, awakened by the gaiety of the bells, became volatile and diffused itself in the air; the city abandoned the earth, full of harmonies, and ascended towards the heavens singing . . . And I dreamt, listening to the pealing of the bells, longing for repose, for sleep, for forgetfulness . . . The Middle Ages appeared to me in my dream: cities, feudal strongholds, monasteries, men and things all linked together by the voices from the belfries which marked in space life and death . . . "

Milkau went on to speak of the old mining town, which he described as a sanctuary. The spirit of religion localized there, gave it a certain character and significance. Within its circle of mountains, irregular and ugly, arose here and there a church, and all of them were simple, sad, erected rather through a need for devotion than through a yearning for art. The houses had the same austere and simple look and were marked with little black crosses on the colorless walls. Everything there wore a priestly aspect, everything spoke of religion, churches frequented at almost every hour of the day, devout women seeking the solitude of the altars, religious festivals which preoccupied as well as kept the people amused during the whole year. During Lent, the religious fervor

increased apace . . . At that time a priest went into the streets in the evening, accompanied by a crowd singing prayers. A black cross draped in the white folds of a sudarium, half a dozen lighted torches, that was all. And they went along a via sacra, stopping at the stations throughout the city. With a happy and radiant devotion, in the most beautiful and complete mingling of classes, the people went along the streets praying in a high pitched murmur, singing in chorus the prayers begun by the priest. And when they arrived at the stations or small altars raised in the street, they sang simple and sweet songs . . . The multitude, kneeling under the clear sky, illumined by the rays of the moon, caressed by the cool breeze from the mountains, pleaded for mercy . . . with a smile!

Surrounded by the hills, the city was guarded by other churches posted sentry-like on the heights. Up the mountain paths the devout people ascended in pious pilgrimage to visit the patron saints of the humble chapels. In the afternoons of holy days, in the summer time, there used to march a procession of seminarists, and this black cordon happened to cross the white company of students guided by Sisters of Charity. The two groups went their own ways, climbing or descending the hills, describing intricate curves, until they disappeared in the horizon . . . And if at the hour of the Angelus some belated pilgrim met the seminarists and saluted them in the name of the Christ, the young men proudly raised their heads, uncovered them with lightning rapidity, and from their throats broke out a fervid shout, made more solemn by the solitude of the evening: "Praise be to God!"

The city spoke also of other traditions of old Brazil. On its broken ground, deep, wide furrows indicated that man, the terrible, had been there to wrench gold from the bowels of the earth. The landscape is all marked with the scars of the wounds inflicted on the earth, which thus ill-treated and abused, clamors to the generations of today against the devastations of the past. The man of today, clean-hearted as he is, will not fail to shudder with terror at the sight of that dead region, the picture of a period full of slavery, gold and blood . . . There are houses there which ought to be preserved as relics of the best periods of a nation. In them lived martyrs and dreamers, and the inhabitants of the place can read on the walls of those houses which have escaped the ravages of time and are peopled by the ghosts of the past, the poetry of the freedom and greatness of the whole country. And that mixture of religious and patriotic faith gives a peculiar character to the old city, purifying it from the vices to which other towns are succumbing . . .

Milkau completed his picture with a few remarks:

"I consider myself very lucky in having gone there in time to see all that, for in a short time that combination of poetry and national tradition will be no more. Really, I feel with deep sorrow that, pretty soon, the city will crumble to ruins, surrounded as it is by foreign colonies which are choking it by degrees until, some day, they will conquer and transform it ruthlessly."

"Well, that is the law of life and the fatal destiny of this country. We shall renew this nation, we shall spread ourselves over it, we shall cover it with our white bodies and make it great even unto eternity. The old

ruinous city of your story is of no interest to me; my eyes look into the future. Porto do Cachoeiro has a deeper moral significance to-day because of its throbbing life and the energy which animates it, than the dead cities of a race which is fast approaching extinction . . . To be frank with you, the civilization of this country depends entirely on European immigration; but it is essential that each one of us should bring along with him the will to direct and govern."

"In your own words is written our tremendous responsibility," said Milkau. "It is probable that our fate will be to transform this country from top to bottom, to substitute another civilization for all the culture, religion and traditions of a people. It is a new conquest, slow, dour, peaceful in its means, but terrible in its ambitious schemes. The substitution must be so pure and luminous that upon it may not fall the bitter curse of devastation. In the meantime we are a dissolvent of the race of this country. We soak into the nation's clay and soften it; we mix ourselves with the natives, kill their traditions, and spread confusion among them . . . No one understands anyone else; there is a confusion of tongues; men, coming from everywhere, bring with them the images of their several gods; they are all alien to each other; there is no communion of thought; men and women do not make love to each other in the same words . . . Everything is disintegrating; one civilization falls and is transformed into an unknown one . . . The remodelling of the nation is being set back. There is tragedy in the soul of a Brazilian when he feels that his race will not last for evermore. The law of nature is

that like begets like. . . . And here tradition is broken; the father will not transmit his own image to his son; the language is dying; the old aspirations of the race, the deep-rooted desires for a distinct individuality, will become dumb; the future will not understand the past."

CHAPTER II.

"I CAN'T see very well," said Lentz.

And closing his eyes, hurt by the powerful light, he could see within his eyelids flashes of sunlight like strokes of lightning.

"I wish," murmured Milkau, "I wish the sun would never set . . . The home of man should be limited to a piece of land where there would be no shadows."

The two young men continued on their way to Santa Theresa, leaving behind Porto do Cachoeiro. At first, the road passed over some hills denuded of trees, and after crossing the clear, rolling landscape over which flitted the shadows of a few wandering clouds, lost itself in the jungle. When Milkau and Lentz suddenly entered the cold darkness of the jungle, they experienced a sort of dizziness, from which they gradually recovered, and became lost in admiration at the sight before them.

The tropical forest is the manifestation of force in the greatest disorder. Trees of all kinds and sizes, trees that stand erect trying to reach the line formed by the tops of the tallest ones, and when other branches bar their upward way, bend down until they almost touch the ground with their tops. Enormous trees whose shade could shelter a whole battalion, trees whose trunks could not be spanned by five men. Slender trees rising to take a peep at the sky, thrusting their heads above the immense, tremulous sea formed by the tops of the others. There

is sap for all of them, energy enough for the development of the highest beauty in each of them. All this vast flora reveals antiquity and life. There is nowhere to be found the traces of a sacrifice which might be the triumph and prize of death. Within the forest, the parasitic plants curl themselves around the old trunks with the gracefulness of an ornament and a caress. There are even trees that are mothers of other trees and gracefully support their daughters, which are rooted in their bosoms, and at times these daughters are even more beautiful than their robust, handsome mothers. An infinite variety of shrubs grow at the feet of the green giants, and a host of minute, compact, daring flowers, grow between others larger and more beautiful. And everything stands upright, everything expands over the earth, forming an enormous, brutal whole, composed of rough members; above, the branches of the trees are woven into a thick, close awning; below, the strong, knotty roots are intertwined into an endless net; everything is interlocked, the gigantic arms twist themselves around each other, holding fast in a living, organic, solidarity . . . Through the small opening in the forest, through the transparent leaves, there descends a discreet light, and under this soft illumination is displayed in the thick of the jungle a gorgeous array of colors. Each in itself is bright and warm, but the shadows of the trees, now advancing, now receding, give them a complete, glorious gradation, from the darkest green to the lightest white. And there, at each end of the road, the gates of the forest form a blue circle, away in the distance, as if they were gates made of light, of a zodiacal, sweetly infinite light . . . And from this colossal body, from the

new trunks, from the old trunks, from the green leaves, from the dead leaves, from the parasitic plants, from the orchids, from the wild flowers, from the resin which slides down the trunks, from the birds, from the insects, from the beasts hidden in the fastness of the forest, there comes a mysterious and singular smell, which is volatilized and diffused throughout the whole and which, like the perfume of cathedrals, soothes, intoxicates, and makes everything drowsy. It is this perfume, both acrid and heady, with the soft light surrounding everything, which makes the essence of restfulness in the jungle . . . The silence of the forest is so serene, so profound, that it seems eternal. Formed by the soft voices, the murmurings, the rhythmic movements of the plants, it is complete and absolute in its perfect harmony. If a reptile slips through the heaped up dry leaves, then the rustle breaks the harmony for a moment; there is a fugitive quiver in the air, a shock agitates the nerves of the forest, and the travelers who go through it, awed by its august solitude, turn round quickly, feeling an instantaneous, electric shiver of fear run through their bodies . . .

"Extraordinary!" exclaimed Lentz, recovering from his astonishment.

"The sensation which we experience here is quite different from that caused by European sceneries."

And looking up, ahead of him, Milkau continued:

"Here, the mind is dwarfed by the stupendous majesty of nature . . . We become lost in admiration. And, after all, he who is lost in admiration is but the slave of a hypnosis: his personality disappears to dissolve itself in the soul of the Whole . . . A foret in Brazil is somber and tragic. It has in itself the tedium of things that are

eternal. A forest in Europe is more diaphanous and transient; it undergoes infinite transformations through death and resurrection, which there succeed each other like night and day."

"But the spectacle of the great Brazilian jungle is astounding, isn't it?" asked Lentz.

"Yes. The truth, however, is that when we come to the regions of the wonderful, the spectacle deprives us of our own selves, it enslaves us. That's what happens with this vitality, this light, this abundance. We pass through here as in an ecstasy, without understanding the mystery . . . "

And they went on silently through the covered way, absorbed in admiration.

After a while, Lentz spoke what he was thinking.

"It is impossible to have any civilization in this country . . . The earth itself, with this violence, this exuberance, is an immense spectacle . . . "

"Well," interrupted Milkau, "you know that nature has been vanquished here, that man is triumphing . . . "

"But what has been done here is almost nothing, and even at that, it has been done by Europeans. The Brazilian is not a progressive factor, he is a hybrid. And civilization will never be accomplished by inferior races. Look at history . . . "

MILKAU

One of the blunders of the interpreters of history is that they conceive the idea of race with a strong aristocratic prejudice. Nobody, however, has been able, to this day, to define the word race, or even to tell how races are distinguished from each other. Lots of

phrases have been coined on this subject, but they are all like those cloud designs which we see up there, fantastic apparitions with nothing solid to back them up . . . And then, which is the privileged race that it alone shall be the tool, the agent of civilization? There was a time when the Semites flourished in Babylon and in Egypt, and the Hindoos on the sacred banks of the Ganges, and they were the whole of civilization; the rest of the world was a chaos about which nobody cared. And at present, it is on the Seine and the Thames that culture is degenerating, surfeited with voluptousness. What I see in the vast panorama of history, to which I turn questioningly and anxiously, is that civilization moves on untiringly from group to group, through all the races, pouring its light and its heat on vast tracts of land . . . Some are flooded with light, while others are left under impenetrable shadows . . .

LENTZ

Up till now, I don't see any likelihood of the black races ever attaining to the civilization of the white ones. Never in Africa . . .

MILKAU

Africa's day will come. Races are civilized by fusion. It is in the meeting between the advanced races and the savage virgin races that lies the conservation of civilization, the miracle of its eternal youth. The part the superior races play is due to an instinctive impulse to extend their culture, transmitting from people to people the product of the fusion, which, after the period of gestation, carries farther and farther the capital accumulated

by numberless generations. It is thus that Gallia became France, and Germania, Germany.

LENTZ

I don't believe that from the fusion with species radically incapable may result a race efficient enough to develop civilization. It will always be an inferior culture, a civilization of mulattoes, eternal slaves, always quarreling and fighting. So long as a race which is the product of such fusion is not eliminated, so long will civilization be a mysterious artifice constantly debased by the sensualism, the bestiality, and the innate servility of the negro. The social problem for the advancement of a country such as Brazil, is the substitution of Europeans for a hybrid race such as the mulattoes. Immigration is not a simple case of esthetics which affects merely the future of one country, it is, rather, a very complex question which affects the future of all humankind.

MILKAU

The substitution of one race for another is not a remedy for the ills from which a civilization may suffer. I hold that progress will be effected in a constant and indefinite evolution. In this great mass of humanity there are nations which reach the highest advancement, then sink and die; others scarcely reach a modicum of culture when they disappear immediately; but mankind as a whole, formed by peoples, races, nations, does not stop in its march, it goes on progressing all the time, and its eclipses, its relapses, are nothing but transformation periods, which are followed by better times. It is the

law of the universe fulfilled in mankind, which is but a part of it . . . When there is no action on the quiet resplendent surface of things, there is taking place a subterraneous commotion, powerful and dark. At times, on an isolated point on the surface, there is the opacity of struggle, and from the fusion a people is formed which recapitulates civilization from its inception and prepares itself to carry progress farther than did the procreative peoples . . .

LENTZ

How can that be? Then, from the contact of artistic peoples with savages you obtain a race which exceeds in esthetic capacity its artistic progenitors?

MILKAU

Art, Lentz, may diminish or increase in some of its expressions, according to the various influences of surroundings and time; but the mere fact that certain forms of art do not flourish, is not an indication that its progress is not greater than ever. If the opposite conclusion were true, then humanity must have retrogressed since the Greek period or the period of the Renaissance, for until now, history has no record of happier times for sculpture and painting.

LENTZ

But the whole question lies in the proper understanding of moral progress.

MILKAU

When humanity left the silence of the forests for the turmoil of the cities, it described a long parabola from

the greatest slavery to the greatest freedom. The goal of mankind is the establishment of solidarity, the union of man with man, the elimination of causes of separation. At first it was might, at the end it will be love.

LENTZ

No, Milkau, might is eternal and will not disappear; it will always subjugate the slave. That civilization which is the dream of democracy, of fraternity, is in reality a sad negation of all arts, of all liberties, of life itself. A man must be strong and have a will to live, and he who one day attains to the consciousness of his own personality, who gives himself up to the satisfaction of his desires, he who in the opulence of a magic poetry creates a world for himself and enjoys it, he who makes the ground tremble, he who is himself the very flower of strength and beauty, he, I say, shall be lord. His goal in life is not the vulgar and mean mixing of peoples; what he seeks in the world is to give expression to the inspirations of Art, to noble, indomitable energies, to the dreams and visions of the poet, in order to lead his flock like a shepherd, like a chief. What matter solidarity and love? To spend life in equality is like rotting in the mire . . .

MILKAU

All the activities of mankind reflect an aspiration for freedom. Liberty is the support, the stimulus, the raison d'être of society. Order is not a moral principle; it merely is a pre-existing and indispensable factor in the conception of society. Society cannot exist without order,

just as there cannot be a sum without figures. There may be harmony at times even in the regime of slaves and lords, but it will be temporary, and without liberty there is no order possible. The search for and the attainment of freedom, as a foundation for solidarity, are the aim of all existence . . . But to get there, what a road man has to travel! . . . Liberty, like life itself, is born and grows in pain . . .

LENTZ

Oh! but that pain sprinkles victory with bitter drops. No, the real man is he who frees himself from pain, he whose nerves are not contracted by agony, he who is serene and does not suffer, he who is lordly, omnipotent, who preserves his integrity complete, he who does not love, for love is but a painful unfolding of the personality.

MILKAU

What unites us in mankind with solidarity is pain. Pain is the foundation of love, of religion and of art, and you cannot substitute for its fecund consciousness the tyranny of a ferocious insensibility.

LENTZ

I really think that we ought to go back and erase to the very last traces the blot of this civilization of the humble, the suffering, the degenerate, to purify ourselves from its poison that is killing us after filling us with infinite sorrow.

MILKAU

I see in the fervor of your words that my sadness before the picture of mankind is entirely different from

yours . . . but it is sadness and despair in both cases. The evil is universal, nobody is satisfied with the times; everybody complains, and neither lord nor slave, rich nor poor, educated nor ignorant, have their share of joy, of satisfaction, as they would like to. And when in a society one individual suffers, that drop of agony is enough to condemn the whole foundation on which the community rests. There is a crisis in everything, the ground itself is shaky and tremulous, the world is stumbling, the atmosphere is irrespirable. Amidst conflicting aspirations, in the turmoil of varied sentiments, how could you obtain the sweet and peaceful harmony of life? Religion went; it belongs to time, and like time, once gone it never returns . . . A civilization of warriors persists in spite of the peaceful aspirations of man's soul. Everything is topsy-turvy, mixed up, struggling in a whirlwind of despair . . . The shadow of the past enters too much into the dwelling of man, filling his abode with spectres and visions which perturb him and set him back. And the future, a messenger of gladsome tidings, advances cautiously like a thief in the night . . . But I did not wait for its vacillating, tardy step; I threw off my heavy clothing, and free from the encumbrance, I went forward to receive the perfume and the nutriment which, slowly, hesitatingly, it is bringing to men. And how sweetly I feel salvation within me!

LENTZ

And to arrive at that . . . you left country, family, society, a superior civilization?

MILKAU

I abandoned all that is vain.

LENTZ

And Europe, Germany, have no further attractions for you?

MILKAU

Only the greatness of their past. But that is incorporeal, invisible, and I don't need to sit on its ruins in order to admire it. You only need imagination and memory to do that. My cult for what is human and active, springs from the double consciousness of the continuity and the undefinableness of progress. What Europe presents to us as a form of life, is merely an inharmonious continuation of the forces of yesterday and of the exigencies of the present.

LENTZ

I don't understand how one can, of his own free will, exchange Berlin for Cachoeiro . . . What city of Germany are you from?

MILKAU

I come from Heidelberg, and my earliest remembrances are associated with it. I can see myself with my father, always together, day and night, like a body and its shadow . . . He was a college professor, one of those university men who are very learned, but like the majority of them, he was rather shaky in his vast scholastic culture. My father, Lentz, was gentleness itself, and the images which I preserve of him in my mind, are those of a man made up of sweet smiles; he had a clear,

subtle intelligence, but being somewhat pusillanimous, his great store of kindness and love remained buried in his heart, and the world knew nothing of it. He restrained and subdued his own imagination. Oh! what barriers he set up to his own mind! Foolish preconceptions came to the call of his timidity, and he received them as if they had been protecting gods. And in this there was a deep unhappiness which must have embittered his life. His expressions never revealed his intense love for humankind. It was a perfume which he kept in his innermost soul, without allowing it to show itself, and this excess of concentration caused his death . . .

LENTZ

How old were you then?

MILKAU

I had just left the university and was coming out into the world when my father died. Day and night my mother watered with her tears the remembrances planted in her heart. Sorrow undermined her health, and I loved her and looked after her until her death, as if she had been a little daughter . . .

LENTZ

And then? . . .

MILKAU

After three years of leading a life between sad remembrance and sorrow, I left Heidelberg with a profound silence within my soul. Then, I began to hear the accents of my own voice.

LENTZ

And did you never hear the voice of a woman?

MILKAU

No.

LENTZ

And did you never love a woman?

MILKAU

When I was ten I felt love for the first time, but as happens with all premature things, that passion of my childhood was half illness, half mystic ecstasy. Whatever religious feelings there are in me, found expression in the adoration of what I was looking for; I attributed my luck and my misfortune to that powerful and tormenting influence. And meanwhile she kept fleeing from me . . . A long time passed in this deceiving hunt; my studies, my games, my childish dreams, took on the form of intense tortures; I shed tears and sweated blood. How I shiver when I remember so much life, so much love wasted on a mere shadow . . . Was it in vain? I don't know . . . When I look back on the past, that period of my life is precisely the one that charms me most; I feel how balmy it is with the love of my youth; that perfume which purified my adolescence reaches me yet . . . And it was, perhaps, very fortunate that on that mountain of fire, reared on my soul, never descended a caress, a smile which would have cooled and extinguished it . . . Up, up I went. By the time I was twenty, everything had come to an end. Her death filled my whole existence, and for

a long time I found no consolation, until another love, the one and only, seized me for ever . . .

Milkau was interrupted by a pealing of bells which traveled along the road and was multiplied in the silence of the jungle. By and by the sound lost its melancholy sweetness and was mingled with human shouts and the rumbling of animals. Soon the two friends saw a herd coming from the high lands towards Porto do Cachoeiro. The leading mule was covered with colored ribbons that hindered the movements of its head. Milkau and his friend stepped to the side of the road and leaned against the trees, but even there the animals, following the trail, brushed them with their loads of coffee, and looked at them with their immense, sad, unfathomable eyes. Most of the herdsmen were white men, the others mulattoes, and their shouts, their orders, their curses, were spontaneously expressed in the language peculiar to each of them. The troop went down the road with a violent racket which disturbed the peaceful sleep of things. It left behind the acrid smells of green coffee, raised dust, and the stirred mud which in the shade and dampness of the trees never disappears. The two friends walked a few steps in silence, but in that strange world they were seized by a strong desire for confidences, and walking between the endless rows of trees, they eagerly returned to the never-ending dialogue about eternal themes.

LENTZ

Really, a short time ago I could not have imagined myself here in the middle of this forest . . . We are governed in his life by the unforeseen . . . It is a simple story—said Lentz, answering a question he could see written in Mil-

kau's eyes—a question of love or, rather, a question of conscience . . . I loved a woman whom I believed to be the sublime creature who, being weak, loves the strong, and being humble, loves the proud. And so, we went along the sumptuous road of my phantasy, I leading her through the solitude of the snow-covered mountains, along the green lakes that refresh the earth, or through the cities with their commercialism and vileness. My beloved learned all the sensations and voluptuousness. She loved in the blood and in the flesh, and thought she was satisfied and happy; but one day she rebelled. The soul of the western woman, which the cowardice of man has rendered eternal, awoke in her to demand from me an unconditional surrender. She found strong support for her pretensions in the Christian prejudices of my father and in the scruples and fears of my mother, who tried to soften me with the vapor of her morbid tenderness. I protested. My father-in-law was an old general, a companion in arms of my own father, and he demanded reparation from my family for what had been an act of independence due to my extreme sensibility. And what is worse, in my own social group I found a hostile atmosphere; they all thought themselves clean enough in conscience to avoid my company, and I confess with shame that I could not stand that collective pressure from the companions of my own class! . . . It will be a long time, Milkau, before man will be able to free himself from the group to which he belongs, to emancipate himself from the horrible tyranny which destroys his individuality and hides his face under a vulgar mask, without any distinction whatever of the family, class or race. My arrogance abated somewhat; what there was in me of the

coward, of the slave, weakened the energy of my attitude; what there was in me of intellectual, of advanced and daring ideas, was killed by the old, inplacable hostility . . . Then I fled, abandoning my studies, my social position, my family, my fortune. What I sought, in exchange for all I left behind, was a larger world, still virgin and free from contact with the lascivious and depressing morals of Christianity; a real domination for the new man, for the man who, jumping over centuries of humility, wants to shake hands with the ancients, and with them and under their influence endeavors to produce a world that will be the realm of radiant force and triumphant beauty. And I came to these virgin forests with the idea of living here alone in the exaltation of my ideal, or to transform them in some future day into a white empire, which is the desire and the goal of my blood. Up till now, I have traveled a good deal. The sea gave me the first great sensation of freedom; I dreamt in it, and I lived intensely, with the joy of pure thought . . . but I did not live on the sea, because there I remained inactive, and life is action . . .

MILKAU

What we seek is so different from what other people seek . . . Like you, I abandoned my native land, society, civilization, in search of greater, of eternal benefits. My wanderings began at an early date . . . When my mother died, my first impulse was to leave Heidelberg and go to live elsewhere. Berlin attracted me, and I thought I would find there a solution to my existence, then aimless and vague. What tormented me most was the consciousness that I was living just to live, without any interest

in life itself. Lacking any religious beliefs, without any moral idea which might support me, society was of no concern to me, and I could derive no consolation from anything. My existence was aimless, wandering with chance acquaintances, and I didn't know where my steps might lead me. I wandered around like a fugitive, seeking in exterior things calm for my spirit. I took endless walks, eternal tramping through the streets, through the parks of the city, through the quiet woods . . But I brooded just the same, and I always went back to the past in my heart, invoking the great images of those I had loved and whose photographs crowded my room, just as they themselves were ever present in my mind. All this time, when my disgust at the world kept constantly increasing, I felt growing within me a strange desire for love, for rest, for sleep which I could never attain; my torture was infinite, my melancholy overpowering. My beloved! . . . my mother! . . . my father! . . . I couldn't rest much longer. My mental disease seemed to me incurable, with my longing for realities and everything appearing intangible, uncertain . . . Nothing could make life attractive to me; what I love now hadn't yet arrived. I was living in a continual disillusionment; my doubts embraced such illimitable spaces that my mind oscillated and lost itself in the world of ideas and emotions. It was then that I felt that anxiety to finish in some way, to put an end to my doubts, and, utterly discouraged, I decided to act in the only way which seemed to me positive in life, that is to say, I decided to commit suicide . . . But the contemplation of the moral misery around me prevented me from carrying out what I called, in my insanity, an act of the will. All the suffer-

ings of my fellow beings reached my soul; the slow agonies and the hard sacrifices of others excited my pity. In the state of mind in which I found myself, I was strongly drawn towards those who seemed to be like myself. I was suffering, and Pain, with its strong and holy hand, led me to other men . . . I reflected: "If all men suffer and become resigned, it is because life is preferable to death, and suicide cannot be collective salvation. It isn't a case of saving one of the martyrs, it is necessary to save them all." . . . And the idea of suicide gradually faded from my mind as the beneficent light of solidarity began to shine in it . . . In order to vanquish despair, I had to find a reason in life which would cure me of my hankering for death and would give an outlet to my new feelings. I surveyed all the roads that could open before me . . . I realized right away that I could not continue in the position I held as literary critic on a Berlin journal; I lacked the courage to speak of books inspired by an empty art, without any ideals, saturated by sensuality. I realized more and more the false position in which I found myself, forming part of a group of ignoramuses and dogmatists who, wrapped in the mystery of the press, exploit their fellow men, whose simple credulity, there as everywhere else, renders them accomplices in the perpetuation of evil upon earth . . . And whither shall I go? I humbly asked myself. Which shall be my role in the world's stage? Politics? Diplomacy? War?

LENTZ

Yes, War. For she is strong and dignified. The world ought to be the happy home of the fighter.

MILKAU

Those two lives, the politician's and the diplomat's, are empty for him who does not seek his own comfort and ambition, for him who does not wish to rot in sterility and egotism, for him who seeks things eternal . . . War is a retrogression to the past, to an ideal which is dead to civilization and was becoming more and more repellant to my mind . . . I had nowhere to go; my crisis was prolonged in this perplexity, for it wasn't a case of choosing between life and death, but between any life and one life, the life I dreamt of, the life I yearned for and which I sought everywhere without being able to find it . . . I could not go into an office or a factory, for there I could not find a suitable atmosphere for my independence and my love. It wasn't a case of doing some work; it was a case of giving free expansion to my individuality, and industry in this old civilization is like a defile of battle, which splits society into lords and slaves, rich and poor . . My agony continued, and amidst those torments, I passed my existence in the soothing contemplation of Art. Beauty entered my mind like a sweet sustenance. Contemplating the triumphant lines of the statues, excited by the vividness of the gestures, rested by the calm attitudes of the eternal marbles, drinking in with my eyes the infinite poetry of color, in the unfathomable enigma of the human figure, my mind rested and gathered strength for existence . . . And then I began to travel for days and days through countries where art still seeks its fountain of mystery and eternal youth . . . It was through art that I began to love nature, for until then my perception of the exterior world was vague and uncertain; I had my eyes turned to my own particular case, to my

own endless and indefinite meditations. From the moment I appreciated art, and beauty took possession of me, my sight expanded over the outer world, and I saw its splendor everywhere. The panorama of the sky interested me profoundly. I spent whole days admiring the limpidity of the atmosphere, letting my eyes wander through the crystaline air or dreaming about the immensity of the clear blue cupola which forms space. I saw the sea, the small sea of the south of Europe, smooth and oily, which embraces a land full of sinuosities, the shelters of man, a sea that does not awe, a friendly sea, forming a link of union between peoples. And from other shores, white, immense, I contemplated another sea, a gloomy sea which strikes terror in one's heart, which subjugates and which, like liberty itself, is inaccessible, tempting, indomitable . . . My worship for nature drew me away from everything that was not its contemplation. Wandering about, lost in admiration, I spent long periods of time alone in the forests, in the lakes, in the woods, extracting the highest beauty from everything. I subsisted more through the reflections of light from the picture where life is taking place than through the food from the earth . . . In the autumn the sun scorches the trees into yellow, and there Death appears like a golden glory . . . In winter, in the fantastic, dead landscape, the skeletons of the trees are covered with white, and on the earth falls the plentiful snow, light in the air, white like ermine, rustling like sand . . . At that time my mind was perfectly oblivious to the tragedies of the past and the worries of the future, and the hypnosis which deadened my conscience made this forgetfulness seem like perfect happiness. Thus I lived for a long time, so

wrapped up in my cult that I went through the world silently and as a stranger. I traveled in my ecstasy, which was like a golden chariot dragged by the fiery steeds of my imagination through the marvelous roads of the placid and mysterious regions of immortal beauty . . . This condition of artistic trance was followed by a desire for self-denial and self-mortification. To lead, in the full consciousness of sensualism, the solitary life of the monks, to eliminate, to evaporate my animality in the combustion of fecund and active feelings, such was the task which I undertook. Buried in a small village, in the heart of the Bavarian Alps, I gave myself up entirely to meditation and study . . .

LENTZ

And did you obtain any consolation?

MILKAU

At first I deceived myself, thinking that there wasn't a hardier, a nobler life . . . but the old monks were heartened by the consolation of adoration . . . My isolation was merely intellectual, a sort of snobbery towards the world, the mean expression of one who abandons his post in life. After the first few moments of pleasure and peace, my cowardice tortured me excruciatingly, and solitude became an afflictive condition. Today Lentz, when I think of the isolation to which a man consecrates himself, I think of the pleasures of the refuge, I think that it is a sacrifice, but I also think that it is a manifestation of empty pride. Asceticism is like a solitary island burning in the middle of the sea; its blinding fires have a fantastic illuminating power over the world, but its flames frighten men away . . . I could not allow myself

to burn in those flames, for I had within me a portion of humanity which led me towards life. Then, one morning, I descended from the height . . . Here, in my eyes, I still preserve the last vision of the glacial mountains. Never shall I return to the vaporous ice-fields, never again shall I see the rosy light of the sun striking the frigid, white stones which are the ice-blocks. Lonely and dead landscape, like the bottom of a dried-up sea, where the ruins of life pass blown by the icy wind . . . Farewell, mountains of silence, consolation and inmolation! . . . When I came down, I was a different man. Love smiled within me and protected me; an infinite contentment seized me and has never abandoned me since. What I loved was to make, to generate love, to unite myself with the spirits, to dissolve myself in the universe and let the essence of my life diffuse itself everywhere, penetrating even to the smallest molecules, like a beneficent force . . .

LENTZ

No, no! Life is struggle, is crime. All human pleasures taste of blood, everything represents the victory, the expansion of the warrior. You were great when your sinister, solitary shadow stalked through the Alps scaring the bears away. But when love enslaved you, you began to degenerate; your manly figure is becoming blurred, and I shall see your face some day, without light, without force, without life, a miserable prey to sadness.

MILKAU

The principle of love sustains me, protects me. I am one of those who were consoled by it . . . The drama of my mind was coming to an end, the painful transition

from a hereditary moral condition to a personal conscience was drawing to a close. Reflecting on the condition of humanity, my thoughts grew clarified when I saw the march of man, beginning from initial slavery . . . At first there is chaos; shapeless masses cover the earth like clouds; little by little, from this cosmic confusion emerge men, personalities, though the rest still remain indistinct in the generating matter. But a day will come when the hour of creation shall strike for them; love will bring them to life, for its work is to create men. Some day the whole will be subordinated to all, in order that each of us may enjoy the greater freedom. It is the parabola described by life, from the meanest slavery to the greatest individuality.

LENTZ

[*Looking at the jungle*]

See how everything gives you the lie. This jungle which we are crossing is the result of strife, the victory of the strong. A hundred battles did each tree fight before it arrived at its magnificent blossoming; its history is the defeat of many species, the beauty of each is purchased with the death of many which were destroyed from their first contact with the powerful seeds . . . How magnificent is that yellow tree over there!

MILKAU

The *ipe*, the sacred wood from which the Indians make their bows . . .

LENTZ

The *ipe* is a glory of light; it is like a golden parasol in the middle of the forest's green vault; the sun burns its leaves and it serves as a mirror for the sun. In order

to reach that splendor of color, of light, and of bodily development, how many deaths has the handsome *ipe* perpetrated . . . Beauty is an assassin, and that's why men adore her so much . . . The process is the same everywhere; and the road of civilization lies also through blood and crime. In order to live life, it is necessary to exhaust energy to the last ounce, not run counter to it. Those who cross their arms are dead. The large fish swallows the little one. It is the law of the world, the monarchical law; the strong attract the weak; the lord drives the slave, man drives woman. All is subordination and rule.

MILKAU

[*Looking at the jungle*]

The whole of nature, the group of beings, things and men, the multiple and infinite forms of matter in the cosmos, I see them all as one single and immense whole, supported in its minutest molecules by a cohesion of forces, a reciprocal and incessant permutation, a system of compensation, of eternal alliance which weaves the frame and the vital principle of the organic world. And everything works for everything. Sun, star, earth, insect, plant, fish, beast, bird, man, form a co-operation of life on this planet. The world is an expression of harmony and of universal love. (*Pointing to the vegetation which covered the top of a rock*). Truly, the life of men on the earth is like that of those plants on that rock. The summit of the mountain was a sterile rock upon which the seeds of the trees and of large plants, carried by the birds and by the winds, could not germinate. At last, one day, they brought the seeds of algæ and of primitive plants for which the rocks provide enough food

for growth. After a long time, the seeds which at first had been unsuccessful, were brought to the mountain again and they found the soil formed by the algæ and grew upon it, spreading their shadow on the ground, protecting the early dwellers of the stones which then developed with a mightier growth, curling around the trunks of the trees, which were their children. From that great love, from that infinite and intimate solidarity, emerged what we admire now: a tropical garden radiant with light, with color, with perfume, covering the naked mountain with a crown of triumph . . . Human life must be also like that. Men are unequal, but in order to reach uniformity, each has to contribute his share of love. The evil lies in force; it is necessary to abolish all authority, all government, all property, all violence. It is necessary not to disturb the harmony of motions and the spontaneity of all beings. In the task of civilization the rôle of each is equal to that of the others; the acts of the great and the acts of the lowly are confused in the final result. History bears witness that culture is not the result of blood and crime alone; side by side with moral coaction there is the powerful force of sympathy. The work of the past is venerable because on it the future will be founded. Let us not curse a civilization which came to us in the old blood, but let us so arrange things that this blood may be more love and less butchery every day. Let our inmost animal instincts be transformed in the luminous flight of pity, self-denial and love . . .

They had arrived at the end of their journey. The two men looked at the red sun hiding behind the mountains, and contemplated Death, which was quietly taking possession of things . . .

CHAPTER III.

MILKAU was sitting at the door of the inn at Santa Theresa, where he had spent the night, and was studying nature as it woke up around him, when Lentz, coming out of his room, met him with a happy, jovial expression, slightly excited by the cool, subtle air. Milkau was glad to see his friend and greeted him with a kindly smile. Shortly after, they took a walk through the city, which was already fully awake and shining in its ingenuous simplicity. The doors and windows of the primitive, white-washed houses, opened in the bright sun-light like eyes that are waking up. The little houses, of monotonous uniformity, lined the street and looked like dove-cots on the side of the mountain. Around the city, there was a green park studded with trees, through which flowed murmuring brooks that seemed the very soul of the landscape.

The two immigrants felt transformed by a soothing peace and by a consoling hope, as they contemplated the beautiful sight the city presented. They could see the people quietly working at the doors or inside the houses, and there the different trades were reborn with all the simplicity of their happy initiation. It was a small industrial nucleus in the colony. While all around them, in the thick jungle, others wrestled with the earth, the inhabitants of the town were busy at their humble trades.

Milkau and Lentz walked through the town listening to the lovely joyful music formed by the noises of toil. An old shoemaker, with long beard and very white hands, sat in his shop hammering on a piece of leather. Lentz found him as venerable as a saint. A tailor was ironing a coarse cloth; women were spinning and singing in their rooms; others were kneading dough to make bread; others with graceful movements were sifting corn flour for the *fuba;* always the same light manual work, humble and sweet, without the shrill scream of steam and with no engines, except the contrivance for the bellows of the smith forge, which the water from a dam kept moving with a sonorous clatter. And all this blessed lively noise was in harmony with the rest. Even the hammering on the iron at the smithy harmonized with sounds of a clarionet with which the conductor of the band at Santa Theresa was giving the morning lesson to his pupils. There was inexpressible happiness in that primitive community, in its retrogression to the beginning of the world. To Lentz's passionate and exuberant spirit, this unexpected meeting with the past seemed like the revelation of a mystery.

"This is heavenly," he said, breaking the silence in which they had been walking. "These poor people modestly working with their own hands, these men who are not stained by coal smoke, who are not brutalized by the noise of machinery, who preserve the freshness of their souls, who are sufficient unto themselves, who sing while they make their bread and clothes . . . these people are simple and natural creatures, and creation with them is the happy satisfaction of the unconscious."

Milkau was also lost in admiration, proud of being a

man away up in that mountain where toil had its peaceful setting; but as he discerned in Lentz's praises the opposite emotion of his own mind, he observed:

"Really, this is a wonderful picture we have before our eyes, and the spectacle of free and individual toil makes us drunk with pleasure. But, at bottom, we are only witnessing the beginning of a civilization; it is like a man who has not yet vanquished most of the forces of nature and merely stands at her side in a humble and servile attitude."

"But who can deny that man, the slave of machinery, is gradually sinking into a barbarism even worse than that of the savages?" replied Lentz.

"As far as I am concerned, there is a mirage in that romantic sentiment. Yes, machinery, specializing and eliminating men, has deprived them of the perception of industry as a whole. To-day, however, when man has been transformed into a mechanism of peculiar motions, he has freed himself, has gained his intelligence, directing mechanisms which are almost on a level with workmen. We can not force the mass of civilization to go back to the old times of industry. The poetry in it is the mysterious perfume of the past, towards which we turn with fear; but there is also poetry, more seductive, stronger, in the industrial life of to-day, and we must look at it from the proper view-point . . . "

"Well," replied Lentz, as he continued walking with Milkau, "I hold these people sacred; they are more worthy of my love than the army of proletarians, full of ambition, hungry and frightful, who are trying to govern the world. These people at any rate, are free from all

sins of pride, are kind and ingenuous, and carry their yoke with a smile."

They walked about for some time, feeling a curious difficulty in leaving the place. They walked along the roads that skirt the town. They sought the small elevations, went up and down the park, stopped at the doors of the houses, watched the busy inmates, smiled at the children, and followed with their eyes the handsome girls, who blushed at their attentions. They amused themselves walking about at random, charmed by the simplicity of the natives which retained them in the little town for some time. But at last they had to tear themselves away. The landlady's daughter took them to the Timbuhy road. They detained her for a few moments with many questions, attracted by her delicate face and her beautiful red hair. Lentz saw in the girl a strange divinity of the green forest, a kindly divinity, like the other inhabitants of Santa Theresa. The girl stretched out her long arm, pointing the way to Milkau and Lentz, and they admired her gesture, her air, her gracefulness, and went away as if in a dream.

At first they walked thoughtfully, without saying a word, as do those who travel towards the unknown. The road went up and down the deserted hills. The wide landscape, fertile and picturesque, offered a variety of aspects with its woods, valleys, forests, rivers, and waterfalls. It was a stretch of one of the most opulent and most productive regions in Brazil. Within it was sheltered the multitude of barbarians and foreigners, who had been received with kindliness and love. Milkau and Lentz passed several colonists' houses, which they saw for the first time, and stood to admire these shelters

nestled in the green and peaceful abundance of the countryside. The little houses were strung all along the valley, some sheltered by the projecting spurs of the hills, others perched on the slopes, and all of them gracefully arranged.

One could see everywhere smoke rising from the chimneys, women at their domestic duties, children and animals under the trees, and men under the cool shadow of the coffee plantations that surround the dwellings. The two immigrants, in the silence of the road, united by a common hope and a common admiration, began to praise the Land of Canaan.

They said that she was beautiful in her magnificent garments, dressed in sunshine and covered by a voluptuous and endless blue cloak; that she was petted by nature. The waters of the river turn round and round her neck and bind her waist; the stars, lost in passionate admiration, pour upon her like the tears of some divine joy; flowers perfume her with their strange scents; birds sing her praises; gentle breezes play with her green hair; the sea, the wide sea, with the foam of its kisses, caresses her body eternally . . .

She was opulent because in her fantastic bosom is hidden an incalculable treasure, pure gold and brilliant stones; because her flocks suffice for the needs of her people and the fruits of her trees sweeten the bitterness of life; because one grain of her prolific soil would suffice to fertilize the whole world and would banish misery and hunger from among men. Oh! how powerful she is! . . .

They said that in her love she tempers the rays of the sun with her shadows, and against the dew of the cold

night she offers the heat of her warm skin, and men find in her, so sweet and consoling, instant forgetfulness for the eternal agony.

They said that she was happiest among the happy because she was a mother who could provide for all,—the house of gold, the providence of carefree children, who would not exchange her for another, who would never leave her protecting skirts but would recompense her with loving, childish caresses and sing to her hymns with a joyful heart . . .

They said that she was generous because she distributes her precious gifts among those who wish them; nobody is turned away from her door, her riches have no owner; she is not disturbed by ambition or pride; her soft, divine eyes see no petty distinctions, her maternal bosom is opened to all like a warm comfortable shelter . . O cherished hope of ours!

They sang these and other praises as they walked along in the sunshine . . .

They had been traveling five hours from Santa Theresa, when they arrived at the banks of the Doce river. They hardly had time to take a look around, for the surveyor, Felicissimo, issuing from a green shed located there, came to them with the brown triangle of his face lit up by a broad, kindly smile.

"Upon my word," he shouted from a distance, "this is a fine time to arrive."

And without waiting for an answer, he went to meet the two Germans, with his hands outstretched . . . It seemed to Milkau that he was the good genius of the native race which ruled over the land and was appearing to them full of joy and hospitality.

"Ah! my friend," exclaimed Lentz, "we very nearly stayed kneeling down in the road, adoring your wonderful country."

"There is no doubt about it; this is a real paradise," assented the surveyor enthusiastically.

Milkau and Lentz very excitedly began to tell him their first impressions. Felicissimo, however, interrupted them, impelled by his hospitable instinct.

"Where are you going to lunch? I could get you something here to appease your hunger . . . "

"Thanks very much," said Milkau. "Just as we left Santa Theresa we ate a few things we had brought with us, and afterwards, on the road, we had a lot of oranges from the orchard of an old woman colonist. We even brought you some. Look how beautiful they are."

"That's nothing," answered the surveyor, taking the oranges. "Don't waste your admiration, for there are many things that will make you stand with your mouths open. Look here, there is no part of Brazil like this one, in everything!"

They walked to a shed covered with corrugated iron, where the surveyor had his office. It was arranged in the simplest of fashions; at one side, several agricultural implements; on the table, two or three large folios which contained a register of lots rented to the colonists, and on the wall, a large map showing the lots of land of the district. Not even one book, nor a humble picture, nor a photograph; only a bundle of newspapers to satisfy the curiosity of the surveyor. Felicissimo had in the same shed his bedroom, which was of nomadic simplicity. Near by, there was a larger shed which was used as lodgings by the immigrants while they were building their

houses on the lots they had acquired. It was roomy and arranged like a ward in a hospital, and at one end of it there was a small kitchen. Felicissimo, however, made an exception of the two foreigners and entertained them in the shed where he had his office. His guests thanked the obliging Brazilian, and, sitting in the bedroom, they engaged in a lengthy conversation from which they learned much about the place. At last the surveyor, seeing that the sun had lowered, said to them:

"Come on, friends! Let us go and choose the lots."

They passed into the office, and looked at the map, which he had taken from the wall. He went on:

"I have an idea that number ten would suit you best. The land there must be splendid. The devil of it is that it is located right in the thick of the jungle and it'll take a lot of work to clear it up . . But I really think it worth while."

And Felicissimo, with a little stick in his hand to point at the map, looked at the other two eagerly. Milkau, without bothering in the least about the selection, and through deference to the opinion of the surveyor, readily accepted the proposal. He felt happy in this glorious day with the mirage of the great and glorious labor ahead of him.

They got ready to go out. When they reached the door, Felicissimo looked at the sky with the air of a connoisseur, reflected a little and said to his companions:

"It is quite a bit from here to the lot. We could not get there and back before dark. But if you insist . . . "

"Not at all," answered Lentz. "Let it go until tomorrow."

The travelers felt a sweet torpor caused by the journey, and lying down on the turf near the house, they

listened to the stories of the surveyor, pondered on vague things, and watched the river lazily flowing by . . .

A group of men armed with agricultural implements appeared in the distance. They approached slowly, dragging themselves along the deserted road on the river bank. Perceiving at a distance that there were newcomers, they walked silently under the reserved and sinister impulse which is the first advance of man towards man . . . When they arrived, they saluted half-heartedly and went silently into the store to lock up their tools. Felicissimo, seeing that they were passing in such a queer fashion, was greatly surprised and shouted to them:

"Hallo, friends! Is the ditch finished?"

"All done!" they answered with one voice, which was a combination of all their voices, and they looked at each other, frightened at having answered in chorus.

Milkau and Lentz admired the strength of these men of iron hands, herculean torso, red beards, and sky-blue eyes, who resembled each other like a group of brothers. There was one young mulatto among them, and he could be distinguished easily. His face was pitted with smallpox; his complexion was bronzed; he wore a short, curly beard and his short hair stood upright on his head. With his bloodshot eyes and his teeth, pointed like those of a saw, he had at times the appearance of an evil satyr. But that impression was not frequent and it quickly disappeared in an easy, ingenuous smile. In the midst of the mass of his red, heavy companions, the Brazilian goat[1] had a victorious, spiritualized air. Was there not, after all, a remote connection between him and the land,

[1]Goat is the name given in Brazil to a half-caste of a Negro and an Indian.

perpetuated by the blood and transmitted from generation to generation?

By and by the men came cautiously where the strangers were and silently listened to their conversation. Just as the sun was setting, turning the waters of the river blood-red, Felicissimo pointed to the sky, showing Lentz and Milkau the flocks of birds which were flying in the twilight, passing along in thin graceful lines.

"My! . . . what a shot I could have at those birds!" exclaimed the mulatto, enjoying, not without some melancholy, the picture which his imagination, that of an inveterate hunter, presented to him.

"Get out, Joca, you couldn't hit one of them, you goat . . . " said Felicissimo, in German, laughing at him.

The man laughed.

"I bet you I could," replied the mulatto pompously. "If I had a good gun, there wouldn't be one bird left flying. I know how to aim . . . and if the gun had a good reach . . . you would see me . . . "

The birds continued to fly together, serene and proud in their flight. Other flocks could be seen in the distance . . . Joca looked at them and followed them with his eyes regretfully.

Lentz admired the facility with which the mulatto could speak German, although he interspersed his phrases with Brazilian words. And addressing the Germans, he asked them if they could speak Portuguese. They answered that they could not, and Felicissimo added:

"Listen, don't be surprised at that, for these men have been in the colony only one year. But there are people who have been here over thirty years and can't speak one single word of Brazilian. It is a darn shame. What

happens is that all our cattle men and laborers learn German. I don't know. There is no people like ours to learn foreign languages . . . I think it must be a natural gift . . . "

Joca agreed with the surveyor, and added that he himself could speak more German than his own native tongue, and he also had a smattering of Polish and Italian. In his innermost thoughts, Lentz felt some pleasure at these testimonials of the inability of the Brazilian people to impose their own language upon other men. This weakness, would it not be like a breach through which the Germanic ambitions would in the future take possession of this magnificent country? And he pondered on this idea, with his eyes wide open and shining.

"The day is not far," said Milkau, "when the Brazilian language will dominate the land. The case of the colonies is a mere accident, due in great part to their segregation from the native population. I won't deny that foreign languages will have a great influence upon the native tongue, but from this mixture will result a language whose basis and whose character will be those of the Portuguese, ingrained into the soul of the population for centuries, fixed in their poetry and preserved for future generations by a literature which is determined to live." . . . (And he smiled, looking at Lentz). "We will be the losers."

This pleased Felicissimo. Joca, who had only caught the last phrase, looked with a superior air at his German fellow-workers. The prophecy imbued him already with the pride of a conqueror.

They were thus amicably talking, when a thin, tall man

passed along the road, close to the river, armed with a gun and carrying on his back a dead animal dripping with blood, which Joca declared was a "paca," a kind of wild boar. The hunter was accompanied by a pack of hounds which preceded or surrounded him, all heated up, their ears cocked or hanging down, exhausted with the hunt, their mouths open and their tongues hanging out, tremulous, nervous, panting, burning the cool air with their ardent and restless breathing, in a combustion which enveloped them in a cloud of vapor. The hunter walked with a hasty step, and the dogs accompanied him barking, excited by the blood which flowed from the prey.

"Ah!" exclaimed Joca, sorrowfully, "if we could get one like that for our pot!"

The hunter passed without saluting them.

"He is a savage," said Felicissimo.

"Does he live around here?" asked Milkau.

"He is our nearest neighbor, but he never salutes us, all the same . . . He passes us as if we were dogs . . . " answered Joca.

"He must be some hermit," suggested Lentz.

"A misanthrope," explained the surveyor. "He never speaks with any one that I know of, and lives alone with those dogs, which are as ferocious as tigers."

The old man continued on his way, unconcerned by the group of men who were observing him, until he was lost in the jungle.

They continued to talk about the singular life led by the hunter, when one of the men approached Felicissimo and informed him that they could start their supper. They got up from the turf, some stretching their arms, some

yawning, and slowly and quietly they all entered the house.

The workers arranged the table for their meals in the immigrants' dormitory, and it was there that they had their supper. The meal was poor and simple, salt fish and dried meat, which is the food common to men of their occupations, and all enjoyed themselves, some quietly, others, like Felicissimo and Joca, lively and loquacious. Lentz looked at the two races gathered at the table. He admired the solidity and heaviness in the German giants, while the interminable empty talk of the surveyor and the mulatto produced in him the nausea of seasickness.

Meanwhile, Milkau was pleasant to everybody, and glad to see this mixture of races, foreseeing a bright future for the guests of a table which seemed like a relic from patriarchal times.

The room was lighted by a kerosene lamp. Its light was gloomy and shaky but strong enough to enable the new colonists to distinguish the face of each worker, who, so far, had been confused in a single mass. Some were matured men, experienced in long suffering, others were newcomers and young, generally strong, and exhibiting in their movements an indolent calmness, and in their eyes a longing for repose. They ate also in the same way, slowly and cautiously. Besides the general uniformity of their class, a long intimacy had given them many points of resemblance.

Milkau enjoyed himself talking to his countrymen, asking them where each came from. Nearly all of them came from East Prussia, from Pomerania; there were, however, some who came from the banks of the Rhine.

"Where are you from?" inquired Milkau of the nearest workman.

"From Germersheim."

"Then we are almost neighbors, for I came from Heidelberg."

The workman smiled, happy to have found a countryman; but his happiness only found expression in a painfully incomplete gesture, like his own mind. To Milkau, a countryman was the sudden and unexpected apparition of his own past. An incomprehensible remembrance of his first years mortified him for a few moments; it was like repentance at not having been in his first years the same man he was to-day. It was a desire to go back, to begin anew, to pay in love all the indifference he had shown for the things of his country, for the men of his city, for the surroundings, in fact, where he had spent his silent youth.

"Ah!" he exclaimed, musingly. "Then you are from the land of Sister Martha! Do you know the Rock of the Nun?"

"Yes."

Lentz asked if that had anything to do with any legend. And Milkau asked the workman to relate the tradition, unknown by the rest of the company. They all turned round to the immigrant from the Rhine.

The man remained for a second astonished and embarrassed, unwilling to emerge from the obscure and collective anonymity in which he had remained at the table. At first he did not say a word, merely shook his head.

Joca, for whom a moment's silence was perturbing and

painful, turned round to his German companion with wrathful eyes.

"Out with it, man alive! Is it a secret?" shouted the goat.

The German at last decided to speak, looking timorously at the other men, scared at finding himself in such a prominent position.

In his own uncouth language, he told how at the time of the crusades, a newly married duke had to leave his wife and go to fight for the Cross. His bride remained inconsolable at the separation, and fearing that her husband might die, she made a vow that if she saw him again, their first-born would be dedicated to the service of God. The duke returned, and after some time, a daughter was born to them and they called her Martha. The child was of astonishing beauty, and the neighbors of the nobility, who wanted her as wife for their sons, were very sorry to see her born dead to the world. Hardly had Martha reached her girlhood when she entered a convent, where her piety, even more than her wonderful beauty, charmed everyone. The duke died in another crusade and the widow, with no other children, remained alone in the castle. Her only comfort was her daughter, who, from time to time, came to see her, dressed as a nun. One day, when she was crossing the wood on one of her consoling visits, she happened to meet a young hunter, son of a Palatine count. Charmed by her beauty, the lad fell madly in love with the Sister and followed her silently to the castle. He struggled with himself to smother his criminal passion, but in vain, and overcome by desire, he planned to kidnap the nun. One afternoon, disguised as a peasant, the young count

knocked at the door of the convent to tell Martha that the duchess was at death's door. The sister at once set out for her mother's home. The count accompanied her and when they arrived at a lonely spot, he revealed his identity, explained his stratagem and asked her to flee with him and hide their love in other lands. The virtuous Martha, frantic with terror, starts to run. The lad, blind with passion, pursues her. They run like mad through the forest. The Sister, losing her way, takes a road which leads away from the castle, and in the fury of her flight arrives at the river, where the count almost seizes her . . . A big rock opens up and the young nun takes shelter within its cavity. The count could not believe that God was thus protecting the nun, and he stubbornly waited until Martha should come out. He remained there days and days, living close to the rock. From within, instead of curses, came the echo of the supplications of the nun for the salvation of her malefactor's soul. Months and years passed; the count grew old, his white beard reached down to his feet, and finally his heart, softened by the nun's prayers, was freed from temptation, and penitent and converted, he sang hymns which Martha taught him from within the inviolable rock. He swore then to consecrate himself to the service of God, and with the intention of founding a religious order, he bade good-bye to the nun with tears of repentance. He went away, old and full of the divine spirit. The rock opened up again and Martha came out as young as when she had entered it. Comforted and fed by the angels, time had not passed for her, and she had the illusion that she had spent but one day within the rock-prison. Confused and timid, she departed for

the convent. During her absence the nuns, hearing in her cell a celestial voice, spent all the time kneeling down at the door, charmed, hypnotized by the melody, praying in ecstasies. When Sister Martha left the rock, the voice ceased in her cell, and the sisters, free from the spell which had kept them at the door, returned to their usual occupations. Martha ran to the convent, and on her way the season, which was winter, changed into spring, and the flowers opened up in the desolate fields . . She went into the convent and found everything as she had left it years before . . . Time had not passed there either. The nun threw herself at the feet of the mother superior, explaining the danger she had run during her absence. The poor mother told her that she must have suffered a moment of hallucination, for she had never left her cell, where she had been singing the most beautiful praises to God. Astounded at her words, Martha went to her cell whence at that very moment issued an angel who had taken her place during her absence and who was her very image.

The supper ended under the vague spell which the evocation of the native legend had cast on the workers. One by one they got up and left the room. They gathered outside, in the open, to enjoy the coolness of the night. Milkau and Lentz also joined them, and in the solitude they felt more and more drawn towards each other. The men lay down on the turf, looking towards the river which seemed like a phosphorescent tremulous band from which radiated the only light which pierced the blackness of the night. The conversation was slow and broken, stumbling on uncertain subjects, for each mind was absorbed by an idea which had taken possession

of it. And one of the men was the common interpreter when he said:

"There are a good many enchantments in this world of God . . . We must always be ready, for no one knows what sufferings there are in store. There is danger when you least expect it . . . "

The others thoughtfully assented with a murmur, and they fell into a deep silence. Lentz tried to raise their spirits, and he began to deny that there were any witches, miracles or enchantments. He spoke at length, but could not shake the convictions which centuries had rooted in their minds. And when he finished by saying: "The witches have all died long ago and they always were the same women that you love," one of the older men did not like his tone and replied:

"Don't say that, young man. Men ought to be careful whom they love. How many misfortunes have happened because men have trusted the voices and songs of women . . . "

Each one recalled some story of his native town. There, in the middle of a tropical land, were summoned by the evocations of the immigrant heroes, Saxon demigods, nymphs from the Rhine, giants with their corteges of fantastic dwarfs. The two Brazilians were intensely interested in these stories from an unknown world which brought to their minds similar European stories handed down to them and adulterated by the whites who had contributed to the formation of their half-caste breed. But now the legends came straight from their origin, purer, clearer, with their character unpolluted by foreign contact; and how they enjoyed the story of the wonderful deeds of Siegfried, son of Sigisbert, and his feats at

the castle of Niebelung, his fight with the giant, the defeat of the dwarf Alberic, keeper of untold treasures, and then his fights, his struggles with the witch Brunhilde, queen of Iceland, in which, thanks to his charmed head-piece, he fought invisible, vanquishing the woman to return her to her husband, until one day the hero died, run through by a lance which found his only vulnerable spot . . . And with what eagerness they listened to the story of the beautiful Lorelei, now kindly inclined, protecting the men of her neighborhood, now vengeful, making the waters of the Rhine to open up and swallow the daring men who attempted to gaze at her mysterious face and who, before dying, became demented listening to her songs . . . In that story was related the passion of the Palatine count for the fairy, charmed by her magic voice, until one day, finding Lorelei on a rock with the lyre in her hand, he fainted and she carried him away to her crystal palace at the bottom of the blue waters . . . And the despair that seized the castle, the father madly looking for his son until, finding the nymph, he asked her to return his son to him, and she, proud, divine as a symbol, answered as she struck her harp: "My smiling crystal palace is in the bosom of the waves, and there, far away from your world I have carried my faithful, loyal lover . . . "

When the story ended, some of the men began to make comments suggested by their foggy ideas. Joca declared that he was not afraid of the mother of the waters. As the others made fun of him, he insisted petulantly:

"You don't feel afraid of any women, devils or witches, after you have had dealings with Currupira."

To Milkau there seemed a rare and beautiful accent in

that term; he thought it was one of those words of the Brazilian language, rich in sound, which have been grafted on to the old tongue, but as he did not know its meaning or the native legend attached to it, he asked the mulatto in a familiar tone:

"Tell us all about it, Joca!"

"Ah!" he answered, getting ready to tell his story, "it wasn't around here, it was in Maranhao. That's where I belong to . . . My uncle, Manuel Pereira, in the estate of Pindoba!, used to tell me: 'My lad, you'd better stop those trips through the jungle to see your girl, for one fine day Currupira'll get you . . . Take care!' I was a careless daredevil, with plenty of nerve, and laughed at the old man's words. 'Now, uncle! stop trying to frighten me. I am not a coward . . . Currupira is only a myth!' And Uncle Manuel Pereira used to go on and tell me some stories and always finished up this way: 'My lad! take care.' One day we had just taken the cattle into the corral. My horse was dead tired with rounding up a wild steer, which I finally brought in at the end of my lasso, after a hard struggle . . . As soon as we arrived I got off Ventania, who, sweating and with his back half-broken, went away to graze . . . My uncle shouted to me to come to supper . . . The sun had cooled when we sat down at the table, my uncle, who was the chief cattle man at the state, and we four, his assistants . . . The goats were so hungry that they scared my aunt. 'Now, boys! You seem to be hungrier than the devil,' she said as she was serving us. 'Good gracious!' The fact remains that the *curimatas* quickly disappeared, not a banana was left behind either, and we wound up the feast with a good drink of *branca*. At that hour the cows

were bellowing to break your heart, licking the calves that pushed towards them on the other side of the fence. I was as tired as could be . . . The others were just as tired as I. But Manuel Formosa, he goes and says to me: 'Don't you know that there is a dance at Mary Benedicta's?' Oh! what a head I have! I had clean forgotten about our appointment . . . The Saturday before I had arranged to meet Chiquinha Rosa at the dance. I was madly in love with the wench; a lass tall as a palm tree, with a head as delicate as a dove. A great desire to see Chinquinha seized me and roused me entirely.

"'All right! Come on, Manuel . . .'

"But Formosa excused himself with some lies; you had only to hear him to know that he had business somewhere else . . . The other fellows were old and married and were not in for any fun. I was quite disheartened for a while, but the thought of the girl gave my body new strength . . . Ah! my blood, keep still. 'Well, seeing that no one will come with me, I shall go alone, for my father's son will not miss a chance of enjoying himself,' I said rather crossly to the lazy goats.

"I got up to go to the pond, and uncle Pereira, who opposed me in everything, began to growl: 'Lad, you are not well. Don't take a bath at this hour of the day or you'll get sick. Then there'll be more work for the others.'

"I didn't pay any attention to the old man's talk and I went to the pond. It was quite light as I plunged into the water and it chilled me to the very bones. I splashed and kicked the water to scare away any *yacares* that might be prowling in the vicinity. I went in a hurry to my ranch to change my clothes. I put on a white shirt

and white pants, and I tied round my neck a red muffler which I had bought from a sailor at the port. I knocked at Aunt Benta's door and asked her for a little of her perfumed pomade, and in two ticks I was ready. Chiquinha had my white muffler from the previous week, for I had left it with her so that she could carry it in her bosom and scent it with the perfume of her own body. She was going to give it back to me at the dance. Uncle Pereira, seeing me ready to start, said to me: 'Come back as soon as you can, for early to-morrow morning, as soon as the moon sets, we are going for provisions to the estate of Marambaia.' 'All right, uncle, don't be afraid. I'll be back in good time and I'll wake you up in the morning.'

"I didn't want any more talk with the old man and I started on my way as fast as an ostrich. From Pindobal to Mary Benedicta's house, is a good two hours' walk. I crossed our fields intending to reach the point at Guariba, and I remember as if it were to-day that everything was dry, and the few lean cattle that stood around had the sad eyes of a dead fish and looked towards the setting sun. You could only hear the grunts of some swine that were digging up manioc with their snouts. When I arrived at the point I went into the store of Joseph, the sailor. "Well, Joca, where are you going all dressed up?' the Portuguese asked me. 'To dance a little at Mary Benedicta's.' 'Listen, a lot of young people passed here to-day. There'll be a lot of people at the dance. And there'll be plenty to drink, for I have sent it all . . . by order of Mr. Peter Tupinamba . . . you know.'

"I don't know whether Sailor Joe's talk heated my

blood a little more, but I felt everything turning round, my heart wanted to jump out of my mouth and my legs were giving way under me . . . But I made an effort and stood up courageously, and in a little while I was able to say to the landlord: 'I am in a hurry to get there, but people should not take advantage of others; they should carry their own provisions. Please give me one quart of *restillo* and cut me two ropes of chewing tobacco.'

"He did as I asked and I started on my way again. The sun had already set and the glow-worms were beginning to fly about in the still air, but their light was quite unnecessary, for the moon was lighting everything. I started on a path through a coppice which considerably shortened the way to the house. The sand was warmer there than in the open fields; a great heat ran through my body; I walked, I walked; the lizards ran shaking the leaves and, from time to time, a woodpecker, perched on a tree-stump, struck the evening hours. There was no living soul around, and I was breathing the dust which I was raising in my hurry to get to the house. I was afraid I was going to find all the couples arranged, and that Chiquinha, tired of waiting for me, had got a partner for the night. Shake a leg! I said to myself. My head, however, was in bad shape, it seemed as if it were going to burst, and I felt very sick in my stomach.

"In the middle of the jungle there was a clearing, and it seemed to me that a form was moving towards me. However, I didn't attach any importance to this and I said to myself: 'It must be Sailor Joe's son going home because his father won't allow him to go to the dance.' Suddenly I heard a sharp whistle behind me. 'Some friend,' I thought, 'who is going to the dance and is

calling me to wait for him.' I turned my head, but I didn't see anyone. I looked again and saw nothing. I went on my way . . . Another whistle came, piercing my ears, another, and another; they seemed to be whistling from everywhere, from the thick of the jungle, from the road, from over the trees. 'What a flock of owls there must be around here . . . it must be an ill omen.' A cold shiver ran through me, and to gain courage I thought of the meeting with Sailor Joe's son. But I looked in vain ahead of me; I saw no one. 'Where has the little devil gone to?' The whistling kept up around me, my head was dizzy and my heart was beating furiously. Again I saw the youngster in front of me; I took a good look at him, for I was quite close, but he wasn't the son of the Portuguese. 'I bet I don't know this kid.' We stood about one hundred yards from each other, when the little one disappeared again. The whistling of the owls went on all the time. I muttered: 'What on earth is that kid doing, disappearing now and again? This is no good.' And he appeared again. Then I shouted in a frightsome voice, to scare the goat: 'What sort of conversation is that? Why do you keep making faces at me?' He said nothing; but why should I have spoken? The whole jungle began to whistle like the devil and I was scared to death with the noise. The little devil was now about ten yards from me. My blood boiled; my head burned. I'll tell you what I did; I just made for him blind with rage. 'You devil! You'll pay me for this!' I raised my stick . . . but when I recovered my senses, some one was holding me by the wrists. 'Let go!' I yelled. The little devil was looking at me with his blood-shot eyes. 'Let go!' But I was held firm. I

moved towards the goat with more rage than when I fought Anthony Pimenta, once when we were branding cattle. I remembered how many brave bulls I had knocked down, and to find myself now fooled by a kid! We struggled up and down; I hit his face with my head, I kicked his shins with my feet, but he always stood up, hard as nails, the ugly monkey! After a few minutes I heard a thundering roar, the roar of a jaguar; ah! I thought the wicked one was going to let me go. But things got worse, for the roar was echoed all over; the wild boars came snapping their jaws, wild cats miauled; I heard the rattle-snake rattling away . . . In a moment I fell to the ground with the little blackguard atop of me. All the beasts hustled in the jungle and came towards us; the very trees bent down making fun of me; the hawks, the *urubus,* came to scent my carcass . . . I felt a terrible fear and my strength abandoned me. I began to shiver with cold, and the sweat made my clothes stick to me. 'Oh! . . . blessed St. John . . . I am going to die!' I exclaimed. And my eyes closed as if I were dead . . . I was half unconscious for a long time, feeling the beasts, commanded by my devilish antagonist, prowling about me . . . Then peace fell over everything; my fists were once more free; a great heat burned my body; I opened my eyes cautiously . . . everything stood still . . . all the beasts had disappeared, and the moon shone as if it had been midday. I was tired with the struggle . . . my tongue was as hard and dry as that of a parrot. I opened my eyes wide, and didn't see either the little devil or the beasts. But I felt a great fear and tried to get away from the place. I passed my hand around me, looking for my bottle of *restillo* and the ropes of tobacco.

To waken up thoroughly, there is nothing like a drink of eau-de-vie and a good chew . . . But I couldn't find a thing. I searched and searched. Nothing. I began to think that perhaps the fight with the kid was because of my bottle. I remembered some words of my old Uncle Pereira: 'If Currupira tackles you, give him right away what you have, drink and tobacco.' And then I knew that I had had to do with Currupira. I got up with a jump. I wanted to run to Mary Benedicta; the dance must have been at its best then. I looked ahead, but the road ended far away, very far away. I was afraid of a new encounter. I turned back, walking as if I were drunk, falling here and there. I went out into the fields bumping up against the cattle; my eyes burned, my blood beat as if it were going to burst out; my tongue was thick and I felt as thirsty as a tortoise . . . but in spite of all, I arrived somehow at the door of my ranch. I didn't want to talk to anyone, so I threw myself into the hammock, which moved with my body as if it had been a canoe at the Boqueirao . . .

"I woke up when I heard people talking at the door. It was the voices of my uncle and of Formoso. They opened the door and the light of the dawn shone in my room.

" 'Time to get up, Joca! Come on!'

"I tried to get up, but my forces failed me. The old man steadied the hammock with his hand, for it was swinging quite a lot. My body shook as if all my bones were having a dance. My uncle told Formoso to open the door and the windows, and the room was flooded with sunlight. He placed his hand on my forehead and I

opened my eyes that were full of fire, and Uncle Pereira grumbled:

"'Didn't I tell you? You got it all right! Why should you have gone and had a bath when you were so tired? and at that hour too!'

"I didn't answer. I was too mad to tell the old man that I had been up against the Currupira."

After this yarn, the colonists sat thoughtful, without saying a word. Each one went back to the beginning of his life, and the remembrance of the past filled his soul with shadows and regrets.

Felicissimo noticed that it was late and advised them to retire, he himself being the first one to get up from the grass. The others stood up yawning, for sleep was already caressing them. From the Doce river and from the neighboring forest came sweet murmurings, and the silent colonists interpreted these nocturnal sounds either as the voices of the mothers of the waters, yearning for the love of men, or as the noise caused by the forays of the wandering Currupira.

In the dormitory the workers snored in their beds stretched on the floor, but Joca tossed restlessly about, without being able to sleep. There was no sleep for him that night. His throat was parched, his skin was burning, and he found no rest in his soft, cosy bed. In the middle of the forest of the Doce river, entirely foreign to his eyes and his heart, the remembrance of his native land made him recall the scenes of the days spent in the place where he had been born, in those fields of Cajapio, so inconstant and variable, whose mobility transmitted itself to the plastic souls of the men brought up in them. Joca considered himself a foreigner in Espirito-Santo;

the mountains seemed to crush him, the narrow defiles filled him with terror, and an irresistible longing carried him back to the vast plains where he had lived. In summer he could see the grass all burned up. The violent love of the sun scorched the fields until not a blade of green grass was to be seen; and everywhere there was drought, death. Not a drop of water; the sad arid desert, and through it, like a never ending snake, the trail worn by the foot of man and the hoofs of animals . . . On clear, cloudless days, when everybody is praying for rain, the earth and the sky merge into each other at the horizon. At other times, the clouds descend till they almost reach the earth; the yellow sun tinges them with colors, and mirages are formed, narrowing down the field of vision, shutting everything up into a limited space, and the traveler follows the mirages, which flee unattainable, making evolutions like an army in an open field. And in this way the mobility of the sky lends some charm to the inmovable sterility of the earth . . . Not a drop of water to refresh even the sight. Here and there, like a moving skeleton, passes a hungry ox, rattling his bones with a harsh, muffled sound . . . Herds of swine dig up the earth with their snouts, eating up the snakes which stretch themselves, oily and happy, in the sun . . . Herds of cattle appear in the horizon, as if they had suddenly emerged from the ground, galloping madly and sniffing the air, crazy with thirst. They pass along like a cyclone, raising the quiet dust which, disturbed in its repose, follows them, envelops them, and chokes them, implacable, swift and red like a column of fire . . .

At the remembrance of those immigrations of cattle, Joca felt a shiver through his body and a desire seized

him to rise from his couch where he was violently tossing about. And the vision of the land with its plains was always before his eyes. It was now just after the first rains had drenched the fields. One morning, away in Cajapio—Joca could remember it as if it had been the night before—he had got up after a terrific storm, towards the end of summer. There was plenty of dew, but the morning was calm, and he got up from his hammock to take a look at the weather. A great carpet of damp fresh grass seemed to have fallen from heaven and to have covered, as with a mysterious cloak, the parched fields of the previous evening . . . The joyful fields extended as far as the eye could see; the cattle celebrated the coming back of life, ravenously eating the tender grass; a flock of ducks passed overhead, alighting here and there; to resume their flight again in search of the lake region . . . For days the rain fell; the grass was now thick and the water seemed to be drowning it. When later on the flood ceased, one could see in the vast green plain, clear spots which were like a rest to the eyes. They were the first lakes, and around them a multitude of aquatic birds disported themselves, displaying their feathers of warm, bright colors. The birds came from all the points of the compass: flamingoes with crooked bills, noisy ducks, graceful and timid *jassanans*. And in the afternoon, when the sky was covered with grey clouds, one could see the flocks of red and martial *guaras*, or the virginal, white wings of the cranes . . . In the bottom of the lakes appeared, as if by magic, a school of fish. And in everything there was the same miracle of resurrection, the same return to youth, the same expansion, the same life . . . But the rains continue and

the waters, forever swelling, flood the fields. The cattle get restless, and there begins another emigration, the winter one, towards the plateaus or little elevations in the plains. They go along slowly, heavily, walking on the strips of dry land, or in the water, or swimming, but never turning back, always going ahead towards the shelters. By the middle of winter the water has obliterated the plain almost entirely, and only here and there an island appears where the cattle crowd against each other. The arid, burning desert of a few months ago has been converted into an enormous, peaceful lake. On it float the big nenuphars, and numerous aquatic plants, long and green, drift on the waters like gulls. Life was changed; the horse was in the stable and Joca pushed his canoe along, while his tall slim figure was reflected on the surface of the tranquil waters . . .

Milkau meditated while he waited for sleep to take him to the land of forgetfulness. He had enjoyed the legends he had heard from the workers; it seemed to him that he had pushed aside the veil which covered the souls of these men and felt a delicious pleasure in the contemplation of the pictures offered by their different minds and in recalling the panoramas formed by each creative people while still in their infancy. In the German legends he could see the Rhine flowing by like a great sacred river which was the center and nerve of the Germanic world, full of enchantment, and whose red haired nymphs were the foam of its very waters. He saw the pictures of the remote past and those of medieval times with their witches, knights-errant and castles. All the idealism of the race was there, and what was born from the waters of the river, forming fantasies and

myths, still remained unalterable. The new Latin gods, penetrating its spirit, had become transmuted into barbaric divinities; its saints were the same fairies of the Rhine and the same old gloomy, warlike gods . . . In the legend of Currupira, another world unfolded itself, and it was the very soul of the cattleman from Maranhao. There was the shadowy jungle, the astonishing, eternal power of nature whose symbol is that wandering divinity which animates the trees, which shakes the beasts from their tropical torpor and protects nature from its perpetual enemy, man, scaring him away. She is awesome, vengeful or kindly, disguises herself in a thousand manners, as an evil being, which is her favorite impersonation, as an animal or a tree, according as cunning and force counsel . . . Milkau felt that these legends presented all the various aspects of superstition, betraying the instincts, desires and habits of the different men. A charmed and mysterious world is that of the souls of peoples! The true philosopher, thought Milkau, will be he who shall know the origin, not only of history and of society, but of one single soul; he who shall have the secret of weighing minds, of reading in the cellules of one brain, the remote, vital sensations of a people, and who shall have the intuition necessary to distinguish in the intelligence of one man the exact proportions of vice and purity, of the innate hatred of one race and the organic love of another. And Milkau fell gently asleep, contented and happy in the beneficent tropical night among primitive men, in the bosom of a new land kindly and strong; and what in the evening had been a subject of speculation, gradually became in his sleep, gently rising from an illumined horizon, a new race which would be

the happy product of the love of all the other races, which would repeople all the world and would found the universal city where light would shine for ever, where slavery would be unknown and life, easy, smiling, perfumed, would be an everlasting wonder of liberty and love.

Lentz tried in vain to court sleep and failed in his attempts to quiet the tumultuous thoughts that crowded his mind. The visions accumulated during the days he had journeyed through the jungle, appeared in his mind with all the freshness of the first impression. At times he felt the heat of the sun which inflamed everything and burned his blood; again, he felt himself going through the damp shadow of the forest whose exuberance and life reached his very soul; then he saw the mighty river, which ran impetuously towards him, impelled by that mysterious force which animated the smallest molecules in all this new world. And Lentz saw everywhere the invading white man resolutely taking possession of the land and driving away the brown man who had grown there. And Lentz smiled at the prospect of the victory and dominion of his own race. The disdain he felt for the mulatto, a disdain in which he expressed all the hatred he felt for his languor, his fatuousness and his weakness, somewhat spoiled the radiant vision which the nature of the country had presented to his excited mind. Now he was dreaming a dream of greatness and triumph . . . These lands would be the home of the eternal warriors, these forests would be consecrated to the fearsome cult of the mad, ferocious virgins . . . It was a recapitulation of ancient Germania. In his feverish mind, he could see that the Germans would come, not in

groups of humble slaves and merchants, not to work the land while the mulattos enjoyed themselves, not to beg a piece of property defended by black soldiers. They would come in great masses; innumerable, enormous vessels would bring them and land them all over the country. They would come thirsting for power and dominion, with the rough virginity of barbarians, in infinite cohorts, killing the crazy, lascivious men who had lived there and had polluted the beautiful land with their torpitude; they would eliminate them with iron and fire; they would scatter themselves throughout the continent; they would found a new empire and would invigorate themselves eternally with the force of nature which they would rule as a slave, and sovereign, rich, powerful, eternal, they would forever flourish in the happiness of light . . . In Lentz's dream, above the ships that sailed the sea and over the armies that marched on land, there flitted in the sky, like a leading cloud, an immense black mass which gradually assumed a strange gigantic form of piercing eyes, the light from which desended from on high and enveloped land and men with an inevitable, magnetic force. Then, alighting on the land of Brazil, Lentz saw the black eagle of Germany.

CHAPTER IV.

EARLY next morning, Milkau and Lentz had a walk around, admiring the place. They went down to the Doce river which, after twisting itself like a reptile through the soft hills of the marvelous land of Espirito-Santo, flows calmly on as far as the eye can see. The torrential rains of the previous days had considerably swollen the river. The gentle breeze sent a shiver through the quiet waters, rippling the surface. The mighty flood had swallowed the banks of the river, devouring the vegetation on the shores, and the submerged trees whose hanging branches seemed before to be sucking up the water, now tinged with green the pearl grey surface of the river. The flood dominated the whole landscape, subduing with singular majesty the profile of the forest and the indistinct silhouette of the mountains, away on the horizon. Thick fogs emerged from the river and were suspended under the sky, obscuring at times the sun and covering the earth with their shadows to the point of making colors possible. There is a truce in the eternal battle with the light, and the panorama which appears before the eyes is not the same as under the powerful sun which floods everything with its only color, reddish yellow; it is not the same landscape, large, warm, monotonous, indistinct, where twilight is but a fugitive dream and night falls like a curtain obliterating day suddenly . . . Milkau and Lentz witnessed under the canopy of fog the resurrection of colors, in the

magnificence of which they voluptuously feasted their hungry eyes.

"There is nothing like this peacefulness," said Milkau as they walked along, "to give you a proper picture of life . . . I feel to-day much happier than I ever thought I could be. Happiness is forgetfulness and hope. It seems to me that we have come to a region where human moans cannot reach us; here there are no signs of suffering, life is easy, smiling and lovable . . . After all, human nature was made for pleasure; and as pleasure is inherent to it, it can hardly perceive it, whereas pain, a strange and rude sensation, shakes it like a hurricane . . . How many elements, however, there are in us to combat pain! How easily we forget it and how one moment of respite causes the illusion of eternal rest!"

"That's because we are the playthings of nature which, with its sweet, perfidious poisons, whose secret it alone possesses, enslaves our lives that it may torture them all the better," argued Lentz.

"But life is more natural than death," continued Milkau, "and pleasure more than suffering . . . And you endow nature with a consciousness which it does not possess. Nature does not exist as an entity distinguished by a will. Our superiority over it lies in our own consciousness which enables us to perceives its laws, its inexorable rules, and forces us to follow a road which will bring us into harmony with the rest of things. And to-day, situated in this world, innocent of sacrifices, we have to find out the true meaning of our exceptional position. Let us deaden the sorrows of our past, if we cannot kill them outright, and our new life will be to us like a dream come true."

"And I also see here the virgin land with its store of energy for happiness," rejoined Lentz, "and I shall live on to see the old city, strong and dominating, which, jumping over centuries of humiliation, will be reborn in this magnificent stage . . . "

"Hope," said Milkau smiling, "seizes us and carries us towards the future . . . Isn't it true that we are happy?"

They went on walking along the shore which the flooded river had converted into a narrow path. At times they had to abandon it and go into the jungle, at others they went along jumping from stone to stone. And they laughed at their own gymnastics, exhilarated with the coolness of the morning, happy with their own illusions. For a long stretch the landscape was uniform; but its monotony was not fatiguing, for the vastness of the waters rested the mind.

"To-day," said Milkau, when they reached an open space along the shore, "we must choose a lot for our house."

"Oh! there won't be any difficulty about that. Plenty of room here to select a small piece of land . . . " said Lentz disdainfully.

"I can't help experiencing a vague terror," said Milkau, "mixed with the extraordinary pleasure of beginning life anew and building our own house with our hands . . . What is really a pity is that in this primitive isolation the State should intervene . . . "

"The State, which in our case is the surveyor, Felicissimo . . . "

"Would it not be better that the earth and its things should belong to everybody, without any sales or properties?" asked Milkau.

"What I see is the very opposite of that. I see the venality of everything, ambition which begets ambition and spreads the instinct of possession. What to-day is without the dominion of man, to-morrow will be his prey. Don't you think that even the air, which at present escapes from our control, will be sold later on in the floating cities, even as the land is sold to-day? Won't that be a form of the expansion of conquest and possession?"

"Look here, don't you see that property becomes more and more collective every day?" argued Milkau. "Don't you see that the desire for popular acquisition which at present is confined to gardens, palaces, museums, roads, will finally extend to everything? . . . The desire for possession will die out as soon as there will be no need for it, when the idea of personal defence, on which it is based, shall become obsolete."

"As for myself," said Lentz, "if I am going to be a colonist, I want to enlarge my own land, to call to me other workers and found a nucleus which will mean fortune and dominion . . . For it is only through riches and force that we can free ourselves from slavery."

"My little corner of land," said Milkau, "shall remain just the same size as it will be to-day when I get it. I shall not enlarge it, I shall not allow ambition to get the better of me, I shall remain happy in the condition of a humble man among primitive people. Since we arrived I feel a perfect charm; it isn't only nature which attracts and seduces we, it is also the sweet contemplation of man. They all have the same kindliness stamped on their faces; they all exhibit the same estrangement from passion and hatred. There is in them all a sweet resignation . . . The

natives are friendly and they seem glad to make us partake of the happiness which they enjoy . . . Those who come from afar have forgotten their bitterness, they are calm and happy; there are no distinctions among them and the chief is happy to lay aside his dignity with a levelling spontaneity which is the very genius of his race. Watching them, I can easily see what the whole country is: a nest of kindliness, forgetfulness and peace. There must be great unity among them; there can't be any quarrels through ambition and pride; justice must be perfect; no victims will be immolated to the hatreds which were left behind on the road to exile. They will all be purified, and we too should forget ourselves and our prejudices in order to think of the rest and not disturb the serenity of this life . . . "

A voice calling from behind drew them from their reverie.

"Are you trying to run away? Where on earth are you going?"

They turned around, as if waking up from a dream, and saw the inquisitive triangle of the surveyor's face. Felicissimo came towards them almost running.

"Good morning," said Milkau, shaking the surveyor affectionately by both hands.

"That's a fine thing to do!" exclaimed Felicissimo with a jovial, kindly expression. "I woke up, dressed myself in a hurry, went to get you for a little chat, and lo and behold! the birds had flown!"

"We thought it would be a pity to wake you up. The house was in perfect silence when we came out. And talking, talking, we landed in this place."

"Well," said the surveyor, "I started to hunt you up,

I searched here and there and everywhere and I am very glad that I came along here . . . And you didn't even take a drop of coffee, or anything . . . "

"Never mind," said Lentz, "it is better to save time and enjoy a longer walk."

"All right. We'll go back to the shed at lunch time . . Why don't you kill two birds with one stone and go to see the lot we spoke about last night?"

"In what direction does it lie?" asked Milkau.

"Right along here."

And Felicissimo, looking rapidly around, found his bearings.

"Here we must be at lot number twenty, more or less. Let's walk a little bit, about one kilometer, and I'll show you number ten."

Felicissimo led the way, followed by the others walking in Indian file along a narrow path. They went along talking in loud voices, shouting, and their conversation was broken and erratic. The sun, appearing between the clouds, violently transformed the restful picture of the foggy morning. The river, turned into yellow, looked as if the enormous incandescent mass of the sun had melted into it and was running through the earth.

"Are you tired?" shouted Felicissimo.

"What do you think we are?" asked Lentz.

"I ask because of the road, for really it is the worst we could have taken. If we had gone by the high road, everything would have been all right . . . Oh, hell!"

The surveyor, making a false move, had stuck his foot in the water and quickly jumped forward. Lentz, who followed him, told him to be careful. Sometimes they had to lower their heads in order to avoid the branches of

the trees. Again, they had to hold them back with their hands. The surveyor amused himself shouting from time to time: "Look out! Branch on your right!" With his hand he held the branch, and when he saw that his follower had taken hold of it, he let go. Sometimes he was in too much of a hurry and the branch went back with the crack of a whip into his neighbor's face. "Be careful!" shouted the victim with a smile. Thus they walked until they came to a cross road, where Felicissimo took to the right and, taking a deep breath, turned to his companions:

"My goodness! What a job! I never thought the river was so big. Let's go along here and we'll soon be in the lot."

Going towards the forest and walking along a path which was neither well beaten nor free from branches, they went on their way dodging stones and pools of water.

Lentz walked silently, sighing and yawning. "Everything here will be troublesome," he thought; "there are no roads, not even the slightest sign of comfort; everything is rough and wild. Would it not be better for me to desist from this life as a colonist and enter some business where there would be a road and everything would have been made ready by others? Really, it is a piece of madness to come to this wilderness to fight nature. Any other life would be preferable to this one. Wouldn't it? . . . " And his eyes landed on Milkau, who was looking at him with a beatific smile.

"What a delicious wilderness!" said Milkau as they advanced more and more into the jungle.

"What a pity that the road is so bad; otherwise we

could enjoy this walk nicely," said Lentz, afraid that Milkau might read his thoughts.

"Oh! don't be downhearted. We'll open paths through all this. We'll make roads, we'll till the ground and we'll build a cosy house which will compensate us for all our troubles . . . Won't we?"

"You won't lack work here," the surveyor chimed in. "As a rule the colonists don't want to do a thing. They just build their houses, work their lands and expect the government to step in and build roads, bridges and all . . . And if nothing is done, there goes a complaint, through Robert or some other big bluff, to the governor, and do you know? it becomes a question of politics and we are always getting hell."

"You must have a lot of trouble," said Milkau sympathetically.

"There are plenty of complaints. I have just now in my pocket a communication from the inspector ordering the engineer to make a report on a complaint from the colonists about a bridge which has all the timber rotting. I believe some of the sticks have already fallen down. We asked for funds, but the inspector paid no attention to our request. The colonists, however, are a tough lot. They went to the big fellows and Robert arranged a petition which he sent to Victoria. The governor was mad because he was afraid of the result of the coming elections, and he sent the petition to the inspector, who, in turn, sent it here to the engineer so that he could make an estimate . . . That takes a lot of time . . But my revenge is that when the money arrives it will be too little; for time does not rest and the timber is rotting more and more every day and it will be necessary

to build a new bridge. And there will be another racket . . . "

"And what will the colonists do if the bridge falls?" asked Milkau, somewhat alarmed.

"That's very simple. They can throw a tree trunk from shore to shore, and keep on living. I am at your service, but I don't give a damn for the government, the inspector and all that crew . . . "

The surveyor's temper was one of those that are easily vented with a few curses. In a short while he had forgotten his troubles and returned to his accustomed joviality. They went along the path and in a short time reached a larger and a clearer one.

"Here is the lot I recommend to you," said Felicissimo, walking on a few steps.

The others looked at the land, which had big trees and was covered by a strong vegetation revealing the fertility of the soil. They could not see through on either side, for the path had been cut right through the wood, in the deep, silent darkness.

For a few moments they remained dumb, overawed by the calmness of things, and their isolation from the rest of the world gave them a painful sensation. Felicissimo, on whose restless, lively temperament silence made no impression, became impatient at not getting an answer, and he added:

"This is a very fine lot. Look at the soil . . . Look at those trees . . . You'll have to do some work, I won't deny that. After burning the brush, which won't amount to much, the difficulty will be to clear the land . . . You, however, can come to some arrangement with the gang,

and they'll do the job in the twinkling of an eye . . . Ah! It'll be great fun!"

"We'll be all right here," said Milkau, who had recovered from his momentary cowardice, buoyed up by a ray of hope.

"It will suit me," said Lentz slowly, trying to conceal his thoughts.

He leaned carelessly on a *sucopira*.

The surveyor looked at the tree.

"What a pity," he said, "to have to destroy all this."

"I would prefer a lot where such sacrifice would not be necessary," said Milkau, echoing the surveyor's feelings.

"There isn't one," answered Felicissimo.

"Man," observed Lentz smiling with a triumphant air, "must always destroy life in order to create life. Besides, a tree hasn't a soul. But if it had one . . . we could eliminate it so that we could expand."

Milkau, with the calmness of resignation, said:

"I understand perfectly well that it is our fate to wound the Earth and wrench our food from her bosom by force and violence; but the day will come when man, adapting himself to the cosmic environment by an extraordinary longevity of the species, will receive his organic sustenance in peaceful harmony with his surroundings, just as do the plants now, and he will be able to dispense with the sacrifice of animals and plants. But for the present we must adapt ourselves to this transition period . . . But I painfully regret that in wounding the Earth I strike at the very fountain of our lives, and I wound, not so much the material in it, but the religious and immortal prestige which it has in the human soul . . . "

While they were talking thus, Felicissimo, led by his ingenuous love for nature, looked at the old trees, and with his hand patted their trunks, just like the last caresses to victims in the moment of the sacrifice. The morning breeze penetrated the jungle, shaking the leaves gently, and at its passage a low, humble murmur rose from the trees, like the muffled moans of the dying.

"Well, what are you going to decide?" asked the surveyor.

The immigrants agreed with a good will to settle on the lot selected by the surveyor.

"You are right, for this situation is eminently suitable for coffee, and, besides, it is very handy, so close to the road."

"And can you get a good view of the river from here?" asked Lentz.

"Absolutely. As soon as you cut down the trees you'll be able to see the whole of it."

"It will be fine to have a little house in this charming spot," said Milkau, beaming with satisfaction.

"You'll see . . . And now, let us be going towards the shed; it is lunch time. We'll come back to-day with the men to measure up."

They started on their way back, excited by the thoughts each harbored in his own mind. They talked loudly along the road, scaring the sleeping birds and shaking from their voluptuous lethargy the lizards that ran away through the dry, crackling leaves.

When they arrived at the shed, they went into the office, and there, in front of the big map of the district, the surveyor showed them the exact location of the lot they had chosen, singing its praises, and at the same time

he took up a pen dipped in red ink and marked the lot with a cross, just as he had marked all the other lots that had been sold. All the documents necessary for the transaction were printed forms, and in one of them Milkau had to fill up the necessary information for proper identification. This done, the two friends signed the petition and handed it over to the surveyor. They paid the costs of the mensuration and the plan and this was the only formality before the lot was delivered to its new owners; for, thanks to the condescension of his chief, Felicissimo disposed at will of all the lands for sale. And it is thus, Milkau thought, that the complicated machinery of the State, with its costly departments and its innumerable officials, is concentrated in the humble hands of a poor surveyor, who is, as a matter of fact, absolute lord of the public property.

"Let's go and get something to eat. You must be starving, for you haven't had a thing since last night," said Felicissimo, laying his hand on Lentz's shoulder.

Lentz instinctively dodged his hand to avoid a mark of intimacy that appeared degrading to him.

The workers were already gathered around the poorly set table when the others arrived. The lunch was noisy at first; a good appetite and the closer acquaintance between them made all feel jolly.

Towards the end of the meal, Felicissimo became sad; something worried him suddenly, and although he tried to disguise it, he could not manage it, and fell into a profound meditation. This cast a gloom over the table, and the men restrained their loquacity. As soon as lunch was over, the workers, who were accustomed to the surveyor's fits of sadness, which were the prelude to the

mensuration of the lots, left the shed, glad to escape the gloomy face of their chief. They went in search of a water barrel which stood in the yard and dipped their hands in, rubbing their faces with much noise and splutter. The barrel was too small for so many people and the men fought laughing to get at it first. There ensued a great racket; each pushed his companion and dragged him away amidst a volley of good natured epithets and uproarious laughter.

"Come on! Get ready there!" shouted Felicissimo. And at the voice of command the men sobered up and finished their ablutions in good order. Then they armed themselves with instruments and tools and began the march. Felicissimo and the new colonists walked behind them. Several times along the road, Milkau courteously attempted a conversation with the surveyor, but the latter, absorbed in his own thoughts, answered the questions laconically. Then they went on in ruminating silence, scorched by the heat of the sun which even in the forest was suffocating. After walking a long time, Felicissimo ordered a halt.

They all stopped mechanically.

"We have to open up ground here."

The workers began to unpack the necessary instruments and tools. The surveyor followed their movements in religious silence, and it was with a certain amount of surprise that he saw them open up a case whence they produced an instrument which Felicissimo took in his own hands with feverish anxiety. He asked for a tripod, which a man quickly brought to him, and began to screw the instrument on it. A solemn calm pervaded them all, and the surveyor performed his task with the greatest

attention. After a while, he found his bearings and ordered three workmen to walk along the road with the rods painted in zones of red and white. And turning round to Milkau and Lentz, he solemnly asked:

"I don't know whether you know anything about it, but this is a theodolite. A wonderful invention! It saves a lot of work in making plans. To-day we do mensuration in the twinkling of an eye, for, as you know, it combines levels and altitudes: you can take a horizontal and a vertical angle, both at the same time . . . Great invention! I don't know how I could get along without it!"

The new colonists were astonished to discover a new Felicissimo, and did not smile. The surveyor became more solemn and gave himself up entirely to the instrument; he looked through the telescope, crouched down, stood up to look over the instrument, readjusted the lenses, turning the screw one way and the other, but always without success. Anguish seized him at his failure, but he was obstinate. He walked away from the instrument to look at it from a distance. He came back to it, fixed it, looked through it again, and always with the same negative result. The workmen stood around in fearful silence, for they knew that terrible moment with the theodolite. Felicissimo, as they well knew, became so changed that he used to insult and beat his men. They feared him, and instinctively drew away from the disturbing apparatus, for fear of a blow. And the anguish of the surveyor was greater than usual that day because he had intended to make a display before Milkau and Lentz. The sun was scorching; the feet burned in contact with the ground; the surveyor was bathed in an extenuating,

cold sweat. Time flew without the mensuration making any headway and to Felicissimo, in his anguish, it seemed interminable.

"Ah! the devil has got hold of it to-day," he said to his guests. "I can't see a thing with it. I bet some of these wretches have put it out of commission . . . "

And he looked furiously at the workers who, with their eyes, thanked the colonists, whose presence was saving them from the outbursts of the surveyor's wrath.

By this time, the men with the rods were tired, and they held the rods in an oblique position.

Felicissimo rushed up to the first one.

"You blackguard! I see why I can't get my instrument to work. You are breaking up the line."

The man excused himself, saying that he only neglected the rod when the surveyor was not at the instrument. Felicissimo was mad with rage, but the shame of his failure did not give any strength to his ire. On the contrary, he became weak, disheartened, wilted. He returned to the instrument in a desperate attempt to obtain a reading. An uncontrollable sadness seized him, and Milkau, feeling sorry for him, exclaimed:

"Better let it go until to-morrow. It's too hot to-day . . . We had a good lunch and we had walked a lot before that . . . you must be tired. To-morrow in the cool of the morning . . . And then . . . who knows? . . . perhaps the theodolite is out of order. You'd better take it home and there find out at your leisure."

"Yes, I think that will be better. There must be something wrong with it . . . But it would be a pity to waste time. Why couldn't we measure it up with the tape? . . .

It is an old system which I don't like, but as the instrument is out of order, there is no other way."

"All right."

"Put this away," order Felicissimo to one of the men, pointing disdainfully to the instrument.

The workers looked knowingly at each other. The old farce of the theodolite had been gone through again. They knew full well that in over two hundred mensurations, the surveyor had never managed to work with the damned instrument which exerted a satanic influence over him, ruffling his temper, putting him beside himself, and was the cause of the terror which had cast a shadow on his mind ever since the end of their lunch. As the theodolite disappeared in the box, Felicissimo's soul seemed freed from anguish, and the surveyor returned to his jovial humor, forgetting his scientific tortures.

"These damned mulattoes . . . " Lentz whispered to Milkau.

And as the surveyor, rid of the theodolite, approached them, Lentz stopped, changed his voice, and somewhat sarcastically said:

"Let's get that tape!"

The mensuration was carried out as usual. Some measurements were taken along the road and into the jungle, and four posts stuck at the corners marked the lot acquired by the two immigrants. The ditch, however, had to be dug up to separate the lot from the others. Milkau asked Felicissimo if he could arrange with the men to have this piece of work done immediately. The surveyor objected that the plan had not been drawn up yet.

Don't let that bother you," said Milkau. "The ditch

will be opened up along the lines you have marked, scrupulously following the rods and measurements. We take the responsibility of digging a new ditch if this one does not turn out according to your plan."

The kindly and obliging surveyor let him do as he pleased, and Milkau hired the men. A few moments afterwards the workers began to clear the ground. At first they chose the shrubs, cutting them down and dodging the large trees, unwilling to tackle the larger job. The line opened up narrow and crooked. But when they saw what they had done, as if waking up from an innate laziness and stimulated by the sight of the strangers, the men set to work in dead earnest. The axe began to sing with energy against the trunks of the trees. Several men attacked at the same time one poor single tree. They exhibited an insane rage, an hysterical fury of destruction and in a short while they were entirely absorbed in their destructive task. The steel, impelled by the arms ever moving in wide sweeps, did not rest. The axe fell with a thunderous crash, drawing a groan from the robust chests of the destroyers. When they met a tougher tree, their energy was redoubled, the sweat ran down their faces, the blows were struck with great force, and the furious impulse sent the steel so deep into the wood, that to draw it out again required a desperate effort. On they went straight as an arrow! The exercise did good to their herculean limbs, and their congested faces were lit with happiness. No longer did they groan as with the first strokes. Growing accustomed to the work, they enjoyed it, and from their rough mouths came the beloved old songs. Joca was the first one to raise his voice. The Germans imitated him instinctively and each in his

own tongue sang ballads learned in their childhood. The mulatto from Maranhao sang of the longings of his heart, of all that he loved with the greatest energy of a human being. And he sang in a tone of voice which was like a long drawn sigh.

"Good bye, jungle, good bye, fields,
Good bye, home where dwells my heart,
Since I hence must now depart,
May I see you again some day."[1]

It was the great event, the drama of his life, that tearing himself from his native land. And he sang about it without paying any attention to anyone, sinking his axe mechanically into the trees. At times he gave up this sorrowful song, and verses of a different character came unconsciously from his lips.

"I saw your tracks in the sand,
And I then began to ponder:
Your body must be a wonder,
When your tracks do make me cry."[2]

In this refined and superior expression of a purely animal sentiment, Joca yelled with voluptuous cries. The cadence and the thought of the strophe are saturated with the sweet and caressing lasciviousness of all his race.

[1]Adeus, campo, e adeus, matto,
Adeus, casa onde morei!
Já que é forçoso partir,
Algum dia te verei.

[2]Vi o teu rasto na areia
E puz-me a considerar:
Que encantos não tem teu corpo,
Si o teu rasto faz chorar!

This solitary Brazilian voice was joined by the strong, musical accents of the German voices. They sang in chorus and their verses were an echo from the taverns of the Germanic country. For a moment, there in the tropical jungle, the immigrants, under the spell of their songs, dreamed that they were gathering together, joyful and boisterous, to drink: "Die alten Deutschen trinken noch ein, noch ein . . . " (The old Germans drink still, drink still . . .). The work continued, more active, happier. The echoes gathered the strange verses of the two races which intermingled in the air to form a curious union . . .

Your tracks do make me cry . . .
Noch, noch ein . . .

Milkau stayed for a few days in the immigrants' lodgings letting time fly, without deciding to begin the life which his heart had planned in a long dream.

The great pity he felt at the sacrifice of the forest paralyzed him. He felt that a little of the beauty and the splendor of the earth was going to die. And Milkau shivered at the thought of all the suffering man has caused in this world, passing by without listening to the moans of outraged nature, destroying everywhere, like the fatal bearer of death. And there is life all around him: in the fertile earth, in the woman he loves, in the very dust he treads. Everything lives, everything has a voice, a soul in the eternal harmony of the universe . . . But, in spite of all, Milkau was willing to forgive man. He understood the inexorableness of his fate, and he resigned himself to necessity.

It was dawn when he approached Lentz and said resolutely:

"We must burn the forest."

The idea of fire flashed through the mind of his companion. A little after, the men got together and they went into the forest with the sacerdotal composure of those who are going to perform some infernal rite. At one of the angles of the forest, they set fire to some brush which appeared to be pretty dry. Before the flames with their agile, red, fiery tongues could reach the branches of the trees, thick smoke rose through the foliage, and, suspended in the subtle air of the forest, began to drift towards the road like a heavy cloud. The fire had started. The flames rose up and licked with satanic greed the trunks of the trees, which twisted themselves in the torture of pain. All the lower branches burned away, and the parasitic plants, like a powder train, carried the flames to the tops, and smoke darkened the paths, followed closely by the burning breath of the fire. Many trees had caught fire, burning like gigantic torches, and stretching their branches towards the others, spread the ravages of the fire. The wind penetrated through the openings made by the fire and fanned the flames. Heavy branches falling, green trunks bursting, resins melting noisily, all formed a desperate music, like a discharge of musketry. The men stood astonished before the general clamor of the victims. Viperine tongues of fire tried to reach them. They retreated, running before the columns of fire that pursued them. Over the forest the birds escaped in terror, flying desperately and soaring above the smoke. An *araponga* pierced the air with a metallic screech of torture. The hanging nests were

burning and the anguished cries of the chickens joined the chorus with their sad plaintive notes. Through the clearings in the forest ran the wild beasts which had been reached by the fire. Some escaped the danger, others fell lifeless into the furnace.

With unfeigned joy, the men saw the green leaves, the flesh of the monster, turn yellow, and the firm, erect trunks, which formed the skeleton, crumble down. But the fire advanced towards them and put an end to their fun. Surprised, astonished, they discovered that the conflagration was threatening their lives and had taken possession of the forest and was passing on to other lots. Resolute and wild, they seized the hoes and began to dig a ditch. Towards the river bank the work was comparatively easy, for the ground was almost clear. There they quickly opened a protecting ditch. On the other side, at the boundary of the lot, in the middle of the forest, the struggle was terrible. The neurosis of fear increased their forces a hundred fold. The pygmies who, unable to vanquish the trees, had had recourse to fire, spurred now by their own defence, threw themselves against the trees with the fury of giants. And blackened, blinded, they dug a trench, and if they met with the obstacle of a trunk, they attacked it anxiously and furiously with the axe. They continued to dig until the fire reached them. The fiery column, animated like a living being, advanced solemnly, bent on satisfying its appetite. The burned branches continued to fall on the scorched ground. The fire was not long in reaching a group of canes. One could hear a frightful succession of shots when the canes burst among the flames. The smoke increased and ascended through the red, burning air; the

detonations multiplied, the flames swept on while the fire embraced the whole group of bamboos. A hundred meters away the colonists continued to dig. Tired of eating up the hard wood of the bamboos, the fire edged along and quickly, voraciously, skirted the road, swallowing up the brush which grew at the edge of it until it arrived at the trench. With a tremendous effort the men had got ahead of it. The flames looked over the barrier and stopped before the open impassable space and extended themselves right and left, continuing their work of devastation.

The colonists and the workmen, after becoming masters of the situation and invincible conquerors of the earth, returned home to the shed.

At night, from the piazza of the big shed, when the stars seemed to walk through the sky in a slow rhythm, Milkau looked forward in his imagination to the happy time when there would be no violence; while the others contemplated with diabolical satisfaction the glowing forest as it twisted in the agonies of the fire.

CHAPTER V.

MILKAU'S happiness was perfect. He had subdued his restless desires, had cleansed his spirit from the strains of ambition, domination and pride, and had allowed his simplicity of heart to return and inspire him. He worked quietly in the plot of land which he occupied. His little house, built in the silence of the jungle, was as humble as those of the other colonists; there was nothing there which did not indicate refined taste, or a certain tendency to comfort. The rustic monotony was only broken by Milkau's bedroom, which gave an impression as of a chapel of love, veneration and remembrances. It was full of those photographs which man carries as protecting genii in his earthly peregrinations. Here there were members of the family: the mother, almost a girl, with her big eyes full of sorrow and supplication; the father, illumined by a martyr's smile; and the girlish woman whom he loved when she passed before his eyes, becoming transfigured before death. Most of them were photographs of the great human figures: poets, lovers, sufferers. Milkau lived with these figures in a deep and religious communion, which gives eternal happiness and fills the void of isolation. He felt himself protected by a flowing hope and resignation, which emanated from the love of remembrances, enveloping him as in an invincible armor. And life, in these surroundings, smiled at him like a

glowing resurrection. To work with his own hands gave him a positive sensation of human dignity. His eyes searched around him for the world where he wanted to go, moved by a strong affection, happy and ennobled, not by what he had done, but by what he was going to do.

In a short time, Milkau was on friendly terms with the residents of the colony at Doce river. It charmed him to associate with these primitive people, who received him without mistrust and who became gradually affected by his superior knowledge and his kindness of heart. Milkau, without exhibiting any intellectual pride, accepted the lessons which the old experienced colonists gave him about things connected with the land. Finding him very attentive, the colonists loved him all the more, and in his presence instinctively assumed an attitude full of sympathy and respect, for he never scared them with a display of his education. Milkau was destined to become gradually the central figure in this region, and without even feeling it, the colonists absorbed the knowledge he radiated, just as the earth drinks the dew drops until she is satisfied.

Unlike his companion, Lentz led a sad life, in an intimate and secret despair. The life he had chosen was a great humiliation to him. It tortured him with the excruciating agony of having to lead an existence entirely opposed to his ideas. He stayed with Milkau, incapable of abandoning him, held by the charm of his companion, which stimulated his mind. To his weak character was coupled the daring of a dreamer, and his kindness of heart was a hindrance to the gigantic wickedness of his idealism. And thus inactive, paralyzed, walking in Milkau's sweet shadow, he, the creator of force, the

apostle of energy, found himself a contradiction, a real man.

In order to amuse himself and to tire out his nerves, Lentz undertook to do the trips in search of provisions for the house, and he felt a deep joy when, all alone, he crossed the mountains silently, dreaming his life dreams in all their greatness. At times he went out hunting, exhausting his strength and calming his nerves with a continuous, persistent effort. It was in those excursions that he used to meet in the jungle the taciturn neighbor who had passed in front of the big shed the afternoon of his arrival. Never saying a word, avoiding all conversation, the old German, agile, energetic, primitive, went on his way followed by a pack of dogs that jumped around him, or ran ahead of him, their ears hanging as they scented the ground.

One afternoon, Lentz came back from Santa Theresa bringing the news that the following day there was going to be a festival at Jequitiba. The new pastor was going to celebrate his first religious service, assisted by the pastors of Altona and Luxemburgo. In Santa Theresa and in the houses of the colonists which Lentz had passed, they were all getting ready for the holiday. Milkau, who wanted to identify himself with the activities of the people among whom he had settled, decided to go to Jequitiba. And early next morning, the two friends left, taking the road that leads into the mountains.

Seldom did any landscape awaken such an emotion in Milkau as did that of the highlands. His very mind was thrilled by the ascent, and his soul scaled the silent and placid regions of the infinite. At the hour of dawn the numbed earth seemed to waken up under the chrysta-

line transparency of the firmament and seemed to try to rise towards the sky, towards space, in an angry motion of strength and despair. And at that moment of dizzy exaltation, the mystic essence which permeated Milkau filled him with a desire to reach eternity and to become dissolved in the infinite.

When they were near Jequitiba, they met caravans of colonists walking or riding. Families and groups, one after another, filled the roads. They were all happy, excited by the coolness of the morning and by the pleasurable anticipation of spending a day in each other's company, for the chapel had not been open for months and the colonists had not gathered in all that time. It was with the pleasure of newcomers that they saluted each other. Some went by at a gallop and then the others excitedly started running along the road in a mad race. The nearer they came to the church, the thicker became the multitude. At certain points they had to slow their steps, so as not to trample on other people, and then they fell into the rhythmic march of a procession. After several hours' journey, as they turned a bend of the road, the two friends perceived the chapel of Jequitiba.

The chapel was in front of them, and they could see the whole panorama of low hills, like the waves of a calm sea, basking in the golden light. Pigmies were slowly climbing up the side of the hill on which the chapel stood. The multitude, flowing thither from all parts, seemed to be boiling in the earth. In the distance, the white chapel, surrounded by the seething multitude, seemed to move like a prey pushed here and there by an army of ants.

They soon reached the foot of the hill, and following

the others, they climbed some wooden steps, built in the earth, which reached to the very top, to the pastor's house, at the back of the chapel. As they climbed up, they could see those who came on horseback, getting off their mounts, tying them to posts, and putting the feed bags on the horses. The summit, where the chapel stood, formed a small plateau, and there the people were elbowing and pushing each other. A hubbub of voices filled the air, disturbing Milkau and Lentz, accustomed as they were to the solitude of the jungle. But they soon got accustomed to the noise, and amused themselves looking at the multitude until the door of the chapel opened.

It was a great gathering of the colonists of the district. Some had been there for thirty years, and their skins were yellow and wrinkled like parchment; others were still red and young. They all wore their best clothes, and this formed a mixture of fashions from all times, religiously preserved in dresses that would never wear out. Each of the women had a dress according to the fashion in vogue when she left her old country. Long dresses with low cut waists and frills, tight fitting waists, crinolines, laces, swallow-tails of sober design, silken toques, simple white scarves covering the head, velvet hats, city dresses, country dresses, they all came to life again in the hills of Espirito-Santo, as if in a restrospective revue of fashions, or as the fantastic gathering of a masked ball.

"This alone is worth the journey," said Lentz jokingly, "an expert could determine by the dresses the time of each migration."

"That's true," agreed Milkau, attentive to the remarks

which his friend was making about the sartorial details. "But let us also admire the happiness of these people."

"Even the old ones . . . "

"The happiness of old people is one of the commandments of life."

Mixed with the smell of the earth, the perfume of the flowers which the girls wore in their hair, and of the Sunday-clothes, long kept stored in trunks, softened the strong odor peculiar to crowds. The people continued to jostle each other, tumultous and happy. Milkau looked around and discovered in the distance Felicissimo, Joca and the employes of the land commission, who had long since left the Doce river and were measuring lots in other parts of the country. The surveyor had a carnation in the lapel of his coat, and from his pocket issued the points of a handkerchief. From where he was standing he saluted, taking off his hat and displaying his broken teeth in a broad smile.

"Well," said Lentz in a low voice, after a prolonged pause, "after all, we have already seen the best of this show. And it is getting hot. What do we care about the pastor's service? Let us take a walk through the hills, or lie down under the shade of a tree while we wait to see the people coming out of the service."

"No. Let us remain here and accompany these excellent people. We'll amuse ourselves seeing how they amuse themselves."

"But, frankly, these people could amuse themselves in some other way. This religion . . . "

"Is as worthy of respect as any other."

"A time will come when man will bury with his

ancestors the cults they handed down to him. Everything will be forgotten. And man will live without fear."

Milkau looked steadily at his friend. For a moment he stood silent, hesitating whether to answer or not. Finally he said:

"The religious spirit is invincible. In order to destroy it, man would have to explain the meaning of the universe and of life; and science, however much it may advance, will never exhaust the wonders of the world. The march of science is like our own along the expanse of the desert; the horizon flees as we advance and can never be reached. The unknown is always yonder, yonder . . . And the religion which idealizes it, the religion, of whatever it be, of a god or of an abstraction, such as is worshipped by human society, is inseparable from man. It is the expression of our immortal emotions, of our eternal wonder at the universe or exaltation of our love, and is always a salutory, divine force."

In front of them, where the slope down hill started, three men were just arriving, brutally spurring their horses, which were panting up the slope. When the riders got off, Milkau noticed that they were better dressed than all the rest. The oldest was a man with a big head, and a heavy paunch. He wore a dark monocle and had side-whiskers. One of the others was very young, dark and beardless. The third was fair, with a fringe of light chestnut hair around his face. He had a tired, lazy air. Lentz was curious to know who they were. One of the men, standing near by, told him that they were the authorities at Cachoeiro.

They really were the judicial triumvirate of the countryside. Watching them closely, one could see that

they were fully conscious of their superior positions. They looked at the colonists as if they had been an inferior, amorphous mass; and the old man of the monocle, very stiff, solemnly and silently received the salutations of the people. Two or three city men made their way through the crowd and came up all smiles to the trio. Others, at a distance, saluted very courteously with the evident intention of winning the good graces of the personages. Instinctively, or through sheer imitation, the colonists went on saluting, and one could see nothing but heads bending low in the direction of the magistrates, who returned their salutations very disdainfully.

The sun had become very warm and under its scorching rays the people were getting impatient. They all looked towards the closed doors of the chapel, complaining because they were always made to wait outside. The men took their hats off and wiped the sweat, and some of them covered their heads with their handkerchiefs. The young women tied their handkerchiefs round their necks, while the old ones fanned themselves with their skirts. They suffered with the heat and grumbled. Some took shelter under the scanty shade of the walls. One group, seeking protection from the sun, had gathered under a miserable shrub. The horses snorted, lashed their tails, to keep the flies away, and ate their rations of Indian corn.

The multitude moved slowly towards the doors, as if they were going to force them. But they stopped suddenly and pushed backwards, grumbling. At last the door opened, and there was a joyous invasion of the dark, cool chapel.

Milkau and Lentz managed to obtain places in one of

the wooden pews, and there, at ease, observed the simplicity of the interior which matched perfectly the simplicity of the exterior. There was not the slightest attempt at decoration; on the whitewashed walls were painted verses from the Bible; in the center, a low pulpit of plain deal, without any varnish, and adorned with white ribbons with holy sentences printed in black; at the back, a black cross with a white sudarium hanging from it.

"Very sad, very bare, as usual," whispered Lentz to his companion. "The Protestant atmosphere is plebeian, unæsthetic; a thousand times better a Catholic church, with its pomp and its ceremonies of subtle symbolical expressions."

Milkau agreed with a nod of his head. All around them, people talked in whispers.

"Haven't you seen him yet?" asked an old woman, alluding to the new pastor.

"Not yet," answered the other. "I haven't been around here for goodness knows how long. Where did you see him?"

"At Jacob Muller's store. I saw him the other day. He seems to be a very nice person."

"Of course! If he weren't, why should we have to give him our money?"

"Oh, well, you know that we can't help ourselves. We've got to give, always. Didn't we ask Robert to bring us a pastor? No matter what he is, we'll have to put up with him."

After resting a little while in the coolness of the chapel, the people again became restless. They tried to conceal their impatience, which was clearly shown by

their yawns and the movements of their arms and legs. It was not long, however, before the notes of a harmonium brought the congregation to a respectful silence. The crowd calmed down, and the instrument continued to sing its solos, like the murmurings of a piano or a flute, followed by a mysterious accompaniment of multiple and infinite voices. The music soothed the nerves of the auditorium. Milkau trembled. The music filled his soul, which was capable of feeling the minutest and most delicious secrets of sound, and of soaring beyond his own self to lose its essence in the most entrancing and hallucinating sensation. Music! . . . What an accumulation of sensations from the souls of our ancestors, what rivers of blood have not flown from father to son, slowly gathering up from each cell the painful, slow vibrations, working steadily to refine the world of nerves until they have formed in man the latest of his souls, the musical soul! . . . While the organ up in the chapel was singing, Milkau, lost in his remembrances, his soul full of harmonies, returned to his early life. It was in a church in Heidelberg, in the old country, in the past . . . And Milkau, with his eyes shut, no longer perceived the boundary between dreams and reality. Everything was strangely confused . . . He sees the figure of a woman who enters in the silent shadow and sits down quietly. Her eyes are fixed on the Bible and on it falls her hair like a golden rain, like a blessing and a heavenly light shining on the book. There is music also in Heidelberg: a fantastic and angelic melody fills the church. Music! The woman Milkau loved, sings. A dream within a dream; in the infinite voluptuousness of the temple, while she, absorbed in prayer, mystic and believer, sang hymns,

he, enthralled by the harmonies, wrote sacred poems; for to write is to sing with the pen . . . Music!

The organ stopped in the little chapel at Jequitiba. Milkau woke up from his dream with a start. His old eyes, with an expression of astonishment, landed on a young woman who seemed to have been amusing herself by watching him sleep. Milkau was confused for a little while . . . Was he still dreaming or was that woman the realization of his vision? He seemed to have seen in another life the same head with the soft curly hair of a child, with the same sweet and loving expression. And she looked at him in an unconcerned way. And when she noticed that she was being watched, she bent her head over her bosom with the submissive attitude of a tame dove.

The new pastor mounted the pulpit, closely watched by the crowd. He was tall, with a red beard which fell on his frock coat and made a fine contrast. His rough hands, the red complexion of his coarse face, the accent of his voice, his phrases, all indicated to Milkau that he was a country chap; and there came to his mind the remarks Lentz had made about Protestantism, which he always held as a dry and simple religion, the one closest to Judaism in its austerity, in the excessive rigor of its monotheism, a rustic religion whose best interpreters were rude, violent, and radical men. When the Church split up, each portion retained those spirits that were peculiar to it; the peoples of the North, uneducated, savage, independent, naturally revolted against the civilized peoples of the South, for whom Catholicism is the natural successor to paganism,—cunning, elegant and ceremonious.

In humble, timid tones the pastor went on pouring out his religious German. This first meeting with the colonists was for him a crisis, and instead of preaching his sermon in an easy manner, he stopped to look at the people, to reflect on himself and his shortcomings. Many times he stopped for want of inspiration, and stumbled on. The congregation lost interest in the vague, halting sermon and devoted their attention to the preacher and his family.

Next to Milkau, a man was talking to a woman, gossiping about another two who were in the choir:

"The one thin and brown . . . "

"She looks like a Jewess . . . "

"Yes, but she seems to be a nice person all the same . . . She is the wife of the new pastor."

"Oh! And is the other one his sister?"

"Of course. They are as like as two peas. They have the same face."

"And how do you know them?"

"I've met them here. The other day I came to fix up the garden. It was in an awful condition . . . You should see it now. I think the pastor likes plants. His sister bosses everything."

"And the wife?"

"I don't know, she seems to be a poor old soul."

"Poor woman! What's the matter with her?"

The colonist did not answer, for noticing that his words were being overheard, he turned to his Bible and hypocritically pretended to be absorbed in it.

From the pulpit the pastor continued his sermon, vainly attempting to warm up to it, shouting and roaring his religion. His voice then fell into a monotonous singsong.

On the other side, opposite Milkau, sat Felicissimo, very nervous, showing unmistakable signs of impatience. The surveyor turned his eyes towards his friends of the Doce river, hung his head down in mock resignation, and distorted his mobile face into a thousand grimaces. Lentz could not help remarking contemptuously to Milkau, who was enjoying himself watching the surveyor: "What a monkey!" The magistrates were not at all resigned to the ennui of the ceremony. The three of them sat together in a pew, near the pulpit, and solemnly faced the crowd. The oldest, who was the judge, could not keep still; he pulled out his handkerchief and wiped his forehead, which was all wrinkled in a frown; he cleaned his monocle, which was badly adjusted to his right eye and fell down, forcing him to repeat the performance. Next to him, the prosecutor clenched his fists, bored to death, tightened his lips, shook his leg, and looked with disdain and hatred at the crowd. The other one, the municipal judge, stroked his beard for want of something else to do, stretched himself in the pew, spread out his legs, and yawned. At times he whispered to the judge, and the latter, mechanically placing the monocle in his eye, as if to hear better, smiled courteously and goodnaturedly.

The Germans, full of respect, did not move; they concentrated their attention on the prayer books, or, with their eyes shut, turned to the empty abyss of their spirits, which they beheld stupified and confused, without a quiver or a thought.

Tedium reigned supreme in the chapel until the new pastor finished his sermon, and then the music of the organ and the voices of the singers came like a flock of wild birds to raise the spirits of the congregation. The

three pastors gathered at the back of the church and read the psalms by turns; the music stopped for a while to give way to a chorus in which the congregation took part. The old pastor of Luxemburgo wore glasses; his face was clean-shaven and his rough voice kept dying down. The pastor of Altona wore a short rough beard and had a cheeky, insolent air about him. Between them, the new pastor of Jequitiba, very big and with soft eyes, appeared like a timid giant. In a little while the service was over; the pastors sat down and watched the congregation leaving the church quietly, slowly, charmed by the music, carrying with them the remembrance of the songs. Outside, they were blinded by the sun for a moment, and hastened to depart. They untied the beasts, gathered up and hid under the saddles the feeding bags, and in a little while men and women were mounted and the mob descended down the slope like the dark waters of a river that has suddenly found a way through the green turf. They went along slowly; nobody hurried, for fear of a dangerous panic. From the thousand mouths of the mob came comments, jokes, boisterous laughter, shouts of joy which disturbed the tranquility of the peaceful countryside. Milkau and his companion also went down the hill, sharing in the general joy, forgetting themselves the better to become a part of the gathering which chance and social instinct had brought together. Down below, where the roads met, the people began to disband; some went right ahead, galloping along the road enveloped in a cloud of dust, others ran even on foot; the women gathered up their skirts as a measure of economy, and covered their heads with them; while the men took off their boots and shoes and carried them in their hands.

The people disappeared along the roads in quest of their houses or of the taverns where they were wont to spend their Sundays. Milkau turned round. Someone was tapping him on the shoulder. It was Felicissimo, who was riding a donkey.

"Man, I am very glad to see you . . . It is such a long time since we met last! And where are you going now?"

"Home, of course," answered Milkau.

"I would propose . . . "

"What?" asked Lentz, interrupting him.

"To go to Jacob Muller's house, where there is a great dance to-night. Even now they must have started the fun."

"But we haven't been invited . . . "

"Well! I'll be blowed . . . You don't need any invitations here in the colony. As soon as you know that there is going to be a feast, all you have to do is to come, for that's part of the game . . . "

"What game?" asked Milkau.

"What game?" echoed the surveyor. "Then you don't know? The fellow arranges a feast with a view to selling a lot of eats, beer and other things . . . Come on, let's go there. It is true that I am riding and we can't go together . . . But what does that matter? The road is here on the left; you go down and then up, and when you reach the top you will find a little house and store. Go past it, take to the right and then keep right on; you can't miss it. When you come to a two-storey house with a big yard in front of it, that's it. You simply can't make a mistake: the house is in holiday garb and you will recognize it at once."

The two friends consulted each other with a look, as

if they did not know what to do, but Lentz was not long in answering.

"All right, we'll go."

"That's the stuff! That's the way I like young fellows, without any stories or nonsense," exclaimed the surveyor, beaming with joy. "Always ready for fun. Well, I have to go . . . I'll go ahead and tell them to reserve three covers at the table for us . . . I have a lot to tell you."

And he pointed with his free hand to his tongue. Then, greatly excited, he shook his head hurriedly and burst into laughter. "So long." He spurred his donkey fiercely, whipped him, gave a yell and went away at a gallop, frightening the colonists with his shouts and galloping. Milkau and Lentz followed his instructions and hurried along the road.

At the top there really was a store where already several persons had gathered in groups, all of them happy. The tavern was clean, kept in order, and had two large doors. Inside, standing against the counter, the Germans drank beer made at Cachoeiro; some of them took eau-de-vie; some women approached the men and they all saluted each other pleasantly and offered each other drinks. The mistress of the house and her daughter—a reddish young woman—busied themselves attending to the customers. Outside, in a great piazza which ran along one side of the house, sheltered by creepers, several families sat at rustic tables having their dinner, served by the landlord.

"How this shadow invites you to rest!" exclaimed Lentz, who was fatigued by the sun.

"We'll stay here a little while and then continue on our way at leisure," said Milkau.

"No . . . If you are not dead, let us go on; for I suspect that if we stop in this house, I'll never go out into the sun again!"

And away they went, casting a longing glance at the noisy piazza, where the green leaves of the creepers formed a sort of frame for the simple, vivid colors of the women's dresses.

On the road they saw a lot of people who were wending their way towards the house of the festival. And when they arrived at the summit of the hill, they saw, away down, a swift little stream, and on the bank the two-storey house, and even at that distance they could see a crowd moving about.

"Let us hurry," said Lentz. "Never mind if we get tired; we can take a good rest down there."

"All right! We are going down, any way. It is lots easier."

Boys and girls passed by them, running down the hill, shouting with joy, anxious to arrive at the house in plenty of time. The sight gave Milkau and Lentz a desire to run, to lose themselves in the joy that pervaded the atmosphere in the exhilaration of the descent. And they ran too; but in a little while they stopped and smiled at each other, somewhat ashamed of themselves.

"Well, well," said Lentz, "here we are running like kids! Following their example."

"It wasn't that that made me stop, but we were simply out of breath," said Milkau surprised at his own display of youthfulness and happy with the idea that his mind

was still young. After all, he thought, nature must reassert her rights . . .

His nerves relaxed, and the flood of light put him in a mysterious and unbreakable harmony with the evergreen, glorious world of Youth.

He lifted his head with satisfaction, shaking his golden beard. His blue eyes were radiant with peacefulness, and with a step full of gracefulness and majesty he descended the mountain.

The neighborhood of Jacob Muller's house was alive with the people that had gathered there. Several on foot and on horseback, came from the chapel at Jequitiba, others from Santa Theresa and from Cachoeiro. The house was beautifully situated at the meeting of several roads and was one of the great business centers in the interior of the colony. On Sundays it was visited by the colonists and even by strangers and by the clerks from the city. It was a white building at the end of a valley and on the margin of a charming brook which hurriedly descended from the hills down to the Santa Maria. There were no plantations around it, but a green fresh turf which shone under the rays of the sun, surrounded it. The building stood out in great relief among the masses of trees and the foliage which covered the neighboring hills.

As they approached the yard, a hubbub of voices met their ears. When they reached the house, the heat of the afternoon was abating and the rays of the sun were beginning to lose their power. They went up to the piazza amidst the noise and clatter of the Germans.

"Come on, my friends, come on!"

And Felicissimo, shouting, ran to them and dragged

them along. Lentz and Milkau, surprised at the effusiveness of the surveyor, asked him where he was taking them.

"We'll go and have a drink of beer."

"No, thanks; let us take a seat, here in the shade. We need a rest," said Milkau.

"Oh . . . rot!" said the surveyor in an angry tone, and he left them suddenly. Milkau followed him to give an explanation of his refusal, but the surveyor, carried away by his bad temper, went away through the groups of Germans and entered the store. Milkau gave up the idea of following him and came back to Lentz, and together they searched for a somfortable place to sit down. They found one at the end of a bench, under an orange tree, right opposite the house. There was great animation among the people. Groups of girls, dressed in white, passed along holding each other's hands. Young fellows, in their shirt sleeves, ran races on the turf and made bets. A swarm of children jumped and capered in the yard, making more noise than a flock of parrots.

Men went into and came out of the store singing with the coarse voice and clumsy gestures of drunkards. The racket from the feet of the dancers in the upper story echoed in the big store, and the languorous notes of an indefatigable barrel-organ came from above, deafening the people. Many of them leant lazily against the windows watching the seething crowd below or contemplating the landscape which seemed also to be in motion, carried away by the swift-moving stream.

Milkau, who remained silent, satisfied with the contemplation of the other's pleasure, saw a friendly face coming towards him. It was Joca, in his shirt sleeves,

with a handkerchief round his neck and a leather belt holding up his trousers. He approached Milkau with his mouth wide open, displaying his feline, closely set teeth.

"Well, well! So you came to have a good time, eh? You have some courage. It's quite a distance from Doce river to this place."

"We left early this morning and took it easy . . . " answered Milkau.

"That isn't quite right," interrupted Lentz. "I am dead beat . . . and I am beginning to get hungry too."

"You won't want for food here. Look into the store, over the heads of these people. See what a crowd there is at the counter; they look like vultures around a carcass. And in the dining-room the tables are already crowded for dinner. What you have to do is to order your places in advance."

"Your boss took care of that," explained Lentz, "but he took offence at us and forgot to tell us what he arranged."

"But he'll come back," said Milkau confidently, "and I'm sure he'll have everything fixed up. And where have you been, Joca?"

"Going all the time . . . Here and there and everywhere. Now we are doing some measuring over at Guandu . . . and in a few days we'll come to Cachoeiro for a vacation. And how is it with you on your farm? I think that your house is rather pretty. How is the plantation?"

"All planted."

"In the clearing we made?"

"Yes, at the side of the house."

"And when shall we drink of that coffee?"

The answer was a motion of the hands indicating a very distant period. For a moment Lentz's cheeks reddened with excitement at the idea of the time that lay ahead of him in this curious life.

"Now there is going to be some fun," exclaimed the mulatto excitedly, looking towards the back of the house. "There comes the band!"

The musicians of the band of Cachoeiro were arriving at the establishment and everybody turned round to look at them. There was a great turmoil and they all rushed towards the bandsmen who, very slowly, as if it were a habit with them, walked towards a small yard paved with cement bricks, where Jacob Muller was accustomed to dry the coffee he purchased from the colonists. During week days, a wire fence protected the yard from children and animals. On Sundays, when there was a festival, the fence was withdrawn and everybody was allowed to enter the yard. Joca left Lentz and Milkau and went over near the musicians, some of whom were his friends and chums.

"So, my boys, you were too darn lazy to move your fingers to-day! The young folks were getting impatient already . . . Old Martin has his arm stiff with playing that barrel-organ to amuse the people upstairs. Come on, boys! Let's have some music!"

And the mulatto, as happy as could be, started to cheer the band of Cachoeiro. A thunderous laughter accompanied his hurrahs. The bandsmen smiled, blushing with embarrassment, and took off their hats mechanically, acknowledging the ovation.

The mulatto went crazy with joy and shouted more

hurrahs for the city of Cachoeiro, for Jacob Muller, and for the young people gathered there. They were all enjoying the fun, yelling, jumping, and dancing without measure. The musicians sat down in a corner of the yard, which was wide, level and polished and reflected from its paving the powerful rays of the sun. In a moment the yard was full of these simple folks, easily contented, whom Joy loves and among whom she reigns supreme.

When the music-stands were ready, the musicians sat down and began to play a march which, in the wildness of their enthusiasm, everybody tried to sing. Joca, singing martially, with his eyes wide open and his nostrils distended, followed a band of fair and blushing girls, who ran away laughing and pretending to be afraid. Some old men, already drunk, trailed their voices and made comical courtesies to some women who laughed uproariously. The children, in bunches, invaded the yard, elbowing their way through the crowd. The landlord, all in white—in his shirt sleeves, with a large straw hat on his head—appeared in the yard, and after talking with the conductor, began to give some orders. Some old women slapped him on the back, others pulled his beard, and he answered their blows, yelling:

"This is for the children only! Clear the yard! Get out of here! You'll dance to-night!"

And then, turning persuasively to the more obstinate ones:

"Come on, old fellow, give us a hand with the customers. Listen! Come inside and have a drink!"

It was an unanswerable and a profitable argument, for the mirage of that drink quickly led the man away from

the yard and increased the profits of the store. The older folks cleared the yard and stood around, forming a sort of frame for it. Then the young ones began to turn round and round as if they had been a wheel blown by the wind.

The band finished the march and a signal was given that they would play a quadrille next. A tall old man, with a long tight coat, wearing blue spectacles, went to the center of the yard to direct the children's dance. There was a moment of quietness then. The old man separated the children according to sexes, then he began to arrange the couples, calling each child by its name: "Albert and Emma," "William and Ida," "Herman and Sophia." Sometimes one of the youngsters protested against the arrangement.

"But, professor, I am engaged to some one else . . . "

"How is that? To whom?"

"To Augusta Feltz . . . "

"It can't be done! You are so small and she is so big," answered the old man, his jaw shaking with excitement.

From among the spectators the mothers interfered, supported by some other feminine voices.

"Never mind, professor. What does it matter? Let them choose as they please."

The dancing master gave in and Augusta Feltz, with her twelve years, long thin shanks and soft gazelle eyes, took her place in the quadrille, bending down her neck towards her partner, who, hanging on to her arm, looked at her with great satisfaction.

At last the dancing master managed to arrange the couples and the band started a dance. The little ones

were well trained so that everything went on without confusion or hitch. Some of the grown-ups amused themselves watching the children, but others grew weary of the sight and strolled around the house or down to the brook, where they lay down on the turf watching the water flow past. Some, arm in arm, like sweethearts, lost themselves in the jungle, some gathered in the balcony to drink and sing the old ditties of pleasure and of human conviviality, which for a moment transported them in their imagination to the land they had abandoned. In everything, the least movement, the least gesture, this gathering at Caja's establishment gave the impression of forgetfulness and joy.

"This is just what I was looking for," said Milkau to Lentz, looking at the scene as they were walking on the turf to the rhythm of the music. "This is what I was looking for, and I have found it . . . To live amidst simple folks, to share in their sweet forgetfulness of pain, to kill hatred . . . Compare these people with the men of other lands, where each one seems possessed by the spirit of the devil, let loose on the face of the earth to devastate it in his attacks of madness, to struggle until he dies in a fit of rage. Here there is at least serenity, calmness and joy."

"But," observed Lentz, while a disdainful smile spread over his face, "at bottom this is only stagnation, an empty and useless existence."

"And isn't love the very essence of action? Isn't love the force which here, in this colony, at the edge of the world, moves men? What more do you want?"

They went over where the children were still dancing with great zest. Now there was a wheel of dancers

which, slow at times, swift at others, moved to the accompaniment of childish songs, strident, out of tune. And as the children were at the very height of joy, a man jumped into the yard dressed like a ragged clown, with his face painted white, and lips and cheeks smeared with red. He was received with a roar of laughter by the grown-ups, and the children stopped their dance scared out of their wits, opening a wide circle for the intruder. The clown began to jump and shout, imitating different animals, and in a little while, amidst the general joy he ran to the wheel of children with his eyes blindfolded in order to amuse them.

"And why hasn't Felicissimo looked for us, I wonder!" said Milkau, drawing away from the dance and taking his friend's arm.

"I don't know. I think he mistrusts us."

"Let us go and look for him," proposed Milkau.

"We had better, for it is time we were getting something to eat," assented Lentz.

By this time, the feeble rays of the sun were transforming the landscape, graduating the colors which seemed to emerge slowly from the secret bosom of nature and spread more freely over the surface of things. A gentle breeze cooled the air and passed lightly over the fair heads of the women, playing with their hair, which tickled them and sent a shiver down their spines. The peacefulness of the evening grew gradually and reigned supreme over these people, overpowering them with its sweet languor.

"Where on earth is that surveyor? . . . Where can he be? . . . " asked Lentz as he went from group to group, looking around.

"He is acting very mysteriously with us to-day . . . Perhaps because we would not go and have a drink with him . . . We might as well have been civil to him. It would not have cost us anything."

"Yes, and we wouldn't have lost such an idiotic friend," added Lentz.

"Now, now! You always go off at a tangent . . . "

They looked for the surveyor all around the house. All to no purpose. They went as far as the brook, down to the main road, and searched every group in the hope of finding their man. All in vain. They went into the jungle. Under the leafy branches of a tree, two lovers were resting, murmuring sweet nothings. At the sight of the strangers the young man bashfully lowered his head and pretended to be gathering boughs on the ground. The girl, however, full of haughty dignity, dismissed the intruders with a serene and frank look of her eyes.

When they emerged from the jungle, they gave up hunting for Felicissimo and went straight to the house.

The counter was as crowded as ever. They were drinking heavily and singing songs with a thick, monotonous voice. The two friends looked around the store but did not find the surveyor. Jacob's wife, noticing their indecision, beckoned them and asked them what they were going to drink. Milkau, pushing some colonists gently aside, went over to her and inquired after Felicissimo. The woman advised them to go upstairs, to the big dining-room, at the back, for they might find him there, and spoke to them about the three places that had been reserved. Upstairs, though the front room was almost empty, with but a few people at the windows watching the children's dance, the back room was fairly

seething with people. At the table, a swarm of people ate with avidity. Others, standing, took broth from plates they held in their hands, or brandished sausages and slices of bread as they bit voraciously, their eyes bloodshot and staring out of their heads in the ecstacies of a bestial appetite satisfied. A smell of garlic, vinegar and pepper excited the crowd and whetted their appetite.

Felicissimo was at one end of the table with one empty seat at either side, and as soon as he saw his two friends, he yelled at them:

"Here! . . . Here!"

Lentz and Milkau made their way through the crowd to their seats.

"So you made up your minds to come, did you? . . . I thought you didn't want to have anything to do with me to-day, you were so greatly taken up with one thing and another . . . What's the matter with you?"

"Come on now, don't try to twist things around," said Lentz. "It was you who left us in a huff and didn't bother with us any more, and we have been going around without anybody to show us the place . . ."

"Don't tell me any stories! You must have made lots of friends with so many pretty girls around! . . . Come on, tell us all about it! Let's have no secrets!"

The German blushed and did not know how to answer. Milkau came to his aid.

"Lentz does not bother about those things."

"You tell that to the marines! I am an old dog!"

"Our only interest is to mix in the joy of these people, to understand their lives and their happiness . . ."

Felicissimo looked at him with his small, sad, vague

eyes. Then with a broad, idiotic smile, he said, dragging his words:

"Now, friend, don't tell me any yarns. You just said, yourself, that you were trying to mix in the joy of these people. Well then, what more would you want than . . ."

"The worst of it is, my friend, that with this discussion we are forgetting to get something to eat," interrupted Lentz.

"You are right!" shouted the surveyor, and rose, leaning with his hands on the table.

He stood up and roared, calling the servants. At last a young girl was attracted by his shouts and came over to the surveyor and stood waiting for his order. Felicissimo looked at her maliciously, winked at his companions, and as the German girl, feeling bashful, started to go away, he began to speak:

"My beauty, my love, please bring my two friends here the same dishes that you brought me. Let's begin with some vegetable soup."

The servant went hurriedly away, with a graceful motion, as if she had been going through the measures of a dance.

Felicissimo smacked his tongue, fixing his eyes on her.

"Ah! what a life! what a life!" he said in a melancholy manner without knowing what he was talking about.

He took up his glass of beer and drank. He looked at the empty bottle in front of him and banged on the table, asking them to bring him another half dozen

"We can't drink so much," objected Milkau.

"If you signed the pledge, I haven't. I'll drink the whole six myself."

Milkau and Lentz began to eat the coarse dishes that

were served to them amidst disorder and racket. Some clerks from the city, better dressed than the colonists, refused the ordinary dishes and asked for canned fowl, which they very much enjoyed, washing it down with Rhine wine. Some of these fellows, who belonged to Robert's establishment, recognized the old guests in the new colonists and saluted them with a shake of the head and an amiable smile. Holding up their bottles they offered them wine from their seats. Milkau thanked them with a gesture, and the clerks, indifferent and disdainful to the rest of the company, continued to drink copiously.

Felicissimo made a great display about his drinking, and kicked up such a racket that he was not long in attracting the attention of all the diners. Excited by this attention, the surveyor made a show of himself in every way. He sang, he danced standing on the chair, making toasts with the glass in his hand. The colonists admired him with an infantile joy, while the fellows from the city tried to squash him with ironical applause and insulting phrases delivered amidst peals of laughter. The surveyor answered these insults by improvising verses in Portuguese, in that countrified tone which suited him so well. Many did not understand him, but the cadence of the verses moved them, and it was out of real pleasure that they begged the surveyor not to stop. He was willing to oblige, and by way of giving some variety to his repertoire he sang some German songs, which he murdered, but the colonists around him took them up with great fire and enthusiasm. There was an unearthly racket made up of the voices of old and young, increased by the sound of plates and glasses

struck by knives and forks, and by the strident notes of a barrel-organ played furiously as an accompaniment to the songs. Its lower notes were almost lost in the fiendish din, and only the sharper and shriller tones could be heard. The landlord, wanting to put a stop to this commotion, took Felicissimo by the arm and tried to force him off his chair. The surveyor strenuously objected and continued yelling. Some of the colonists surrounded Felicissimo to protect him from the landlord, and finally the latter was unceremoniously kicked out of the room. The surveyor ordered some beer at his own expense and had it passed around. Each bottle was grabbed from the hands of the servants, and in the general confusion and disorder the liquid flowed over the tables from the glasses upset in the fight. Milkau, fearing something untoward might befall the surveyor, suggested going out to spend the rest of the evening in the yard.

"I won't budge!" shouted Felicissimo.

And the drunken Germans echoed him, yelling

"He won't budge! He won't budge!"

And thenceforth those words served as a sort of crazy refrain to each song. Those who were still sober laughed at the others and above all at the comical effect of their own songs, full of love and rustic idyls, tagged with the surveyor's refrain.

Milkau and Lentz found themselves in the midst of a crowd of lunatics who were bandying at each other insulting or funny phrases, and they withdrew from the room quietly, without any ill feeling, followed by the jests of those who remained behind.

Outside, the moon was rising, and its light gradually

took possession of the fields which the sun had just abandoned. In that moment of transition the breeze was dying down, and they all fell under a mysterious spell of nostalgia and restfulness, their eyes fixed in space and lost in melancholy. In the yard the children, tired with their exercise, had quieted down, frightened by their own silence, and the smaller ones rested their sleepy heads on the laps of their mothers, who sat on the ground. The musicians gathered up their instruments and repaired to the house for something to eat. Milkau and Lentz went down to the river and walked along the bank for a while. They stopped and sat down on some stones. Later on, when it was beginning to get cold, they heard the music again and went back to the house. When they returned, they found it all lit up, and the yellow, warm light that shone through the windows opened up a circle of fire in the soft milky light of the moon. There was hardly anyone left in the yard. The children had disappeared and their elders had gone back to their settlements or had gathered in the dance hall. The two friends went upstairs to the front room where they had started to dance. The band was playing a slow, languorous waltz. There were but few dancers, for most people were still at table or stood timidly at the doors and windows. Most of the couples were made up of girls who, tightly grasping each other, turned round and round trying to encourage with their movements the shy lads until the latter, having gained courage, came and separated them and took them for their partners.

It was not very long before the dance was in full swing. The room, as night went on, became more crowded, the band never ceased playing, and they all enjoyed them-

selves heartily. Now one could see the great variety of people gathered in Jacob's house. Here were merchants from Cachoeiro, clerks from the city, cattlemen, farm hands and servants promiscuously gathered without any distinction of class. Milkau was sitting at an open window watching the dance. In the couples who were dancing a Polish dance, there passed before him a young woman of flexible figure and sweeping, voluptuous movements, easily distinguished from the other girls who, shapeless and heavy, were noisily dragged along by their partners. A man of coarse features who was standing near Milkau spoke about her.

"There isn't one can touch Louisa Wolf."

"You are right, she is very graceful."

"Ah! You've got to know her, and then you find that she is like that in everything. She never gets tired of lifting that pretty head of hers. To-morrow morning she'll be working with just the same air . . ."

"I suppose she is a colonist . . . "

"No, she is a servant in Cachoeiro and her master is the same man who is dancing with her . . . Martin Fidel. Don't you know him?"

"No."

"Well, he is all right. He is one of the wealthiest merchants in the city. The whole family is here. His wife is old . . . like himself . . . There she goes arm in arm with that tall young fellow, the one with the big nose. Don't you see her? He is a colonist, and the son of a colonist at Jequitiba. His father is also dancing. That's him, the small dapper man with the beard and the hat on. His partner is the servant, a sight . . . as you can see."

The dancers continued through the martial measures of the Polish dance, forming various figures, now a half-moon, now opening up into two wings, now performing evolutions with men and women by themselves, meeting again after several turns. The movements were slow and heavy; moving along with an effort, they struck the floor with their heavy hobnailed boots, making a dry, deafening sound that drowned the music from the instruments. When the dance finished, the couples turned at once, as if moved by a magical spring, and with slow step went over to the benches that were placed along the walls, or to the recesses at the windows. Some of them went out into the yard for the cool air; lovers walked about in the dark with their arms around each other; old men smoked their pipes and passed a few remarks until the music began again. Then they all returned to the dance hall quietly, without any hurry, and started again to dance automatically, the men with their cheroots or their pipes in their mouths and their hats on, the women with handkerchiefs round their necks to stop the sweat that ran down from their foreheads.

Milkau was all alone. The man who had been speaking of Louisa Wolf, had tired of talking to him about the colony and its inhabitants. Lentz had not been in the dance hall for a while and his friend thought that, perhaps tired by the simple, monotonous dances of the colonists, he had gone down to the yard and was walking about all by himself. Felicissimo would not leave the dining room, where he continued to drink and sing with his German friends. From time to time, at the least pause in the music, their loud joyful voices reached the dance hall.

Two women sat down in the same bench next to Milkau. He recognized in one of them the girl who had looked at him during his dream in the chapel. They were close to him now, those big, caressing eyes in which he could see floating sad images which perhaps were the life and love of the girl. She was panting and seemed exhausted, and sat down in the greatest abandon. She looked furtively at her neighbor and at times she even dared to look him straight in the eyes with a happy, innocent expression. She had a certain beauty and an elegance uncommon among the colonists. Her carriage was graceful, her bust erect and of delicate curves. Her white hands, perhaps a little too long, extended from her arms like greyhounds' heads. But what gave her an air of superiority was her wide forehead, her fluffy, silky red hair, the expression of her mouth—a somewhat colorless mouth, but moist and kindly.

The band started again after a while, playing a waltz, and the dancers took to the floor. It was then that Milkau spoke to his neighbor.

"Don't you dance?"

She was not frightened in the least by his voice and quickly answered:

"No. I can't dance. I am not feeling very well. But if you want a partner, here is my friend who is a great waltzer."

And with a loving, almost maternal gesture, she touched the other girl's hand and let her caress her, as if she were accustomed to her friend's loving ways.

Milkau felt somewhat confused and excused himself explaining that he could not dance.

"That's what I say when I don't feel well," said the girl, "but no one believes me. That's often the way . . ."

And she smiled a little. Her voice was an intimate, sonorous song, something as if a veil were being torn which concealed the delightful image of her soul. And as is the case with every human voice, her accent revealed her personality. The voice, which expresses the music of the soul, enables us to perceive the secret qualities of the mind, the nobility or grossness of the race or the moral group to which we belong.

A lad approached them, and without saying a word, according to their manner, took one of the girls by the wrist and dragged her away for a dance. The girl turned round beaming with happiness and said to her chum:

"Mary, where will you wait for me? . . . I don't want to lose you. I have a lot to tell you . . ."

"I'll wait for you right here. I'll be in this bench or at the window."

When the girl had gone, led by her partner, Mary said to Milkau:

"Don't you think she is rather pretty? She is the daughter of a colonist at Luxemburgo. We hadn't seen each other for a long time. This was a real treat for us . . ."

"I see! . . . We have been going around with this crowd since the early morning. I remember seeing you at the chapel at Jequitiba," said Milkau.

"Yes! That's right. I remember that we weren't very far from each other."

"And I'm ashamed to say that I fell asleep!"

Mary blushed, but she quickly resumed the conversation.

"The heat was terrible . . . and the pastor was not very entertaining . . . was he?"

"I don't know . . . On the contrary, I had a wonderful sensation of comfort, and sleep came and took me away in a cloud of happiness."

"Ah, well!" she exclaimed, and then she added confidingly: "At times, I think it were better for us to spend our lives sleeping . . ."

"I am beginning to think that you are a very lazy girl . . ."

"Me? . . . Never!" answered the girl sharply. "It isn't laziness . . . It would be to forget my worries that I would like to fall into a long and profound sleep . . ."

The phrase ended in a vague, resigned voice.

"Worries? I think I know the simple things that you call by that sad name," observed Milkau.

She lowered her eyes but did not answer. When she raised them again, she changed the subject.

"How lovely it is to dance!"

She affectionately waved her lovely hand to her friends as they passed before her dancing the waltz.

Milkau was beginning to find pleasure in talking to the girl, who for her part did not feel the least embarrassment and spoke freely as if she had been talking to an old acquaintance.

When the music stopped, the couples separated and each of the dancers went in a different direction.

"You see," said Mary to her friend, "I waited for you right here."

"I knew it. And now, do you want to take a walk or shall we remain here?" asked her friend panting, as she instinctively sat down.

"Oh! my goodness! Talk about walking . . . and you can hardly stand! No, my dear, take a rest for a little while."

"Perhaps," observed Milkau, "it would be better for your chum to sit at the window. There are several empty chairs there. Let us go over. The fresh air will restore her strength."

They stood up and the girls rushed to the chairs for fear some other people might take them. When they reached the window they looked at the picture outside. The whole landscape was flooded by the whitish light of the moon; the clouds, descending from the sky, had vanished towards the horizon and the vaporous expanse, free, starless, colorless, was gradually turning into a polished, transparent sheet of purest crystal. The moonlight softened the green shades of the trees; the brook flowed rumbling by; a gentle breeze shook the branches of the trees whose long shadows kept dancing incessantly.

"What's that?" asked Mary frightened by a roar of voices that reached the dance hall from the dining room.

They all turned around to find out the cause of the disturbance. A great discussion in loud shrill voices was taking place, interrupted now and then by thunderous peals of laughter. Still, Mary and her chum did not feel at ease, thinking that there was a fight on. Milkau went out to see what was the matter and returned in a few moments.

"It's nothing. The surveyor, Felicissimo, is of opinion

that there have been enough German dances, and that it is about time they were having some Brazilian ones . . . The musicians don't know how to play them; the lads protest against an innovation which they don't understand; the surveyor insists, he tries a few steps, whistles, tries to force the musicians to play . . . "

"And what's the outcome of it all?" asked Mary.

"The outcome of it all is that Felicissimo will have his own way and we shall see some native dances."

And right enough, the surveyor managed to have his own way. After several unsuccessful trials he got the musicians to play a tune the measures of which resembled more or less those of a native dance. Having agreed on this tune, the musicians took up their instruments and the people anxiously ran to the dance hall to secure good places, laughing uproariously the while. There followed an expectant silence. Nobody moved in the hall, which had been cleared for the dance. Most people were sitting down and a few stood at the doors and windows. Felicissimo stood close to the musicians, humming the tune. It wasn't long before the instruments were tuned up and the band started a slow, voluptuous dance. Felicissimo, with unsteady step, his eyes squinting out of his head, walked over to the center of the hall and in a shaky voice yelled:

"My friends! . . . this is the *chorado!*"

Raising and lowering his arms, he tried at the same time to make his fingers crack. But his sleepy hands produced no sound. The music sighed languorously, and the lonely dancer, in the middle of the room, went through a series of idiotic, meaningless contortions. He turned on himself, crouched down, dragged his leg, but

none of his motions kept time with the music. They laughed at him, thinking his performance stupid and grotesque. The surveyor's drunkenness was complete, and incapacitated him entirely. Felicissimo turned round a few more times and finally, as if with the pitching of a ship, his body fell quickly, violently against one of the walls. There was pandemonium. Some ran away from the place, scared to death; some screamed with fright, others laughed at the whole performance. The surveyor leant against the wall with one hand, thus saving his head, and fell heavily into a chair. Through sheer enthusiasm and pleasure, the band continued to play. Felicissimo still attempted to get up, but his neighbors held him down to his chair, afraid of some untoward accident. He let them hold him, thanking them with one of those tender, sheepish looks peculiar to drunken men.

For some time nobody moved, and the music continued to play its long, sad measures. But, suddenly, like a faun of old, Joca burst into the room and began to dance. His native soul forgot for a moment his painful ostracism in his own native country, among people from foreign lands. Carried away by the music, which spoke to his very soul, the mulatto was transported beyond himself and seemed to be transfigured by his intense and extraordinary happiness. His whole body moved with but one rhythm; his erect head took on an expression of endless pleasure; his mouth, with its serrated teeth, was half opened by a smile; his hair waved freely, stood on end or fell languidly over his brow; his feet flew at times over the floor or remained in one spot while his legs shook violently in the frenzy of the dance; his hands

hung down while he cracked his fingers, or were joined when his arms were extended in the air in front of him, or clasped above his head; and drunk with music, standing on the tips of his toes, with arms outstretched, he seemed to be trying to fly. At times he ran along the room, shaking his body, with his feet close together in short, quick steps; again, following the measures of the music, he glided languidly along, pensively, with his head hanging down and his eyes wide open, and he went over to some woman, almost on his knees, hesitating, desiring to carry her away in a fit of voluptuousness which he succeeded in repressing but which one could guess was feverish, fiery. Suddenly he stood up with a tigerish jump and returned to his frenzy as if seized by some satanic fit. His whole body shook all over violently and his motions were so rapid that he gave one the impression of standing still in the air as if he had been a hummingbird. At that moment the band could have stopped playing, thus upsetting the dance; Joca would not have perceived the silence of the instruments, for in his triumphal body, in his rare happiness, with the impulse of his soul, living, breathing in the old dance of his race, he was, all of him, motion, vibration, music.

The scene, with the lonely actor, continued for some time. Joca then looked for a partner, a woman who would answer his appeal and could accompany him in his evolutions. No one came, no one felt an impulse to run, to fly with the rhythm of that dance. They all felt curiosity, but nothing more. Disheartened, seized by sudden sadness, by the remembrance of the girl-companions of his youth, of the black women who felt as he did, he grew gradually tired . . . His breast

heaved, his brownish legs did not shake with the same energy as before or with the vigorous flexibility of a bow-stick.

Exhausted, he bent down his tired body, and the last interpreter of the national dances abandoned the ground to the conquerors, to other music, to other dances. It was the German waltz, clear, long, flowing like a river.

In the hall the couples danced furiously. Mary's friend was among them. Outside, the moon shone more clearly and the shadows shortened and became more fixed. A couple whispered at one of the windows, forgetting to dance. It was a long, interminable, whispering dialogue. For a moment the girl raised her voice and full of passion, she exclaimed, as in the old ballad: *Ob ich dich liebe? Frage den Stern* . . . Mary quivered when she heard the love song, and without knowing what she was doing, raised her eyes to the sky, looked at the moon and murmured in a low tremulous voice:

"Oh! . . . How sad! . . ."

Milkau's thoughts, as if obeying some mysterious call, turned to the dead satellite. He imagined the solitude of a world without life, travelling like a corpse along the road to infinity . . . He thought that perhaps some day all life would end in this radiant, wicked, happy Earth, and an immense sorrow and a great silence would reign over this same spot, so full now of movement and happiness. And for how many had not the isolation, which is the beginning of death, already started? . . . He thought about his own life, his destiny; about the isolation in which he was spending his own existence,

enveloped as if in an impalpable veil which did not allow him to go into the world and prevented the world from coming to him. His life, sad, without a mate, his chaste and mystic life was worse than the eternal cold . . .

The dance ended and the hour of parting arrived. An old woman came to Mary at the window and called her. The girl bade Milkau good-bye, as if he had been an old acquaintance whom she would meet again the following day. Milkau, already recovered from the momentary fit of despondency, went to look for Lentz and found him among some colonists in the yard, in the open air.

"Well!" said Lentz jovially, "I thought you were going to be the last person to leave this house! I didn't know you were so terribly fond of fun."

"I amused myself watching how happy the others were, and wanted to leave you free to enjoy yourself in your own way."

"I have been here talking about Germany with these friends. And we also spoke of a future Germany, of a Germany which is to come . . . Isn't that so, friends?"

The others applauded the prophecy.

"All right!" said Milkau, "let us be going home now."

"Come on, then! Good-bye, friends. See you again some day!"

For hours and hours they traversed the same road they had followed in the morning. Suddenly, after passing a huge plantation, beautiful with the velvety blackness of the coffee plants, on the side of a majestic mountain, they began to see black crosses and white stones among the coffee plants.

"What is this?" asked Lentz.

"A cemetery!" answered Milkau.

And he added:

"You see, in Canaan there is no place for Death. The earth makes as little room for tombs as possible, and they, scattered here and there on the side of the mountain, cannot darken the light or cast a shadow on Life, which obliterates them in the glory of her triumph."

CHAPTER VI.

MARY could not forget the brief moments of her meeting with Milkau. Many of the stranger's words had become fixed in her mind and she kept the remembrance of the day of the dance as a quiet holiday for her soul, as a ray of light in the bitterness of her life.

The history of Mary Perutz was as simple as wretchedness itself. She was born in the colony, in the same house where she still lived. The daughter of immigrants, she did not know her father, who had died in the big shed at Victoria shortly after arriving in Brazil. The widowed mother—almost a pauper—hired herself out as a servant in the house of old Augusto Kraus, an old colonist who had settled at Jequitiba, far away from the Porto do Cachoeiro. The "settlement" was prosperous and the other inhabitants consisted of a married son and a grandson who was Mary's senior by one year. They lived quietly and the two children grew up like brother and sister, and old Augusto, having reached the end of that circle in which ages meet, amused himself in filling the souls of the children with remembrances of his own life and the far away things of his Germanic country. Mary had forgotten her mother's death, which must have happened in her remote infancy without even leaving a trace in her memory. Her family and her home were these people and this house in which she had been

sheltered. Knowing nothing of her own history, she lived unconsciously for many years, without noticing the world from which she could not be distinguished and of which she formed an integral part in her great innocence. To live a pure life, to live for the sake of life in complete happiness, is to adapt oneself definitely to the Universe, as the trees live. To feel life is to suffer; conscience is only awakened by pain.

Mary's greatest friend was the old man. Mary, grown up into a young woman, looked after him as if he were a child. She talked to him for hours, she sang to him songs the sense of which she did not understand, fabulous loves, legends, strange countries, but which to the tired and nostalgic soul of the colonist were as intelligible and welcome as the sun itself. They only separated at night, after supper. Then the old man went to the yard and sitting down on the dried trunk of a tree began to smoke, musing the while. His dream was always the same, a violent desire to return to his native country, to see again those silent Silesian mountains where, as a child, he had slept while tending the flocks. In those days he knew by name the solitary stars. He had watched them, like so many convicts marching through the blue firmament, until during his journey to Brazil, while the boat was rolling and pitching, they came down from the heavens towards the waters and one evening they disappeared and were exchanged for others . . . But even in this new world now and then came some of the old friends as if they had become separated from their companions, and he saluted them by their names with childish joy. And it was to see the old stars that old Augusto sat down in the open air until he fell into a gentle sleep, as if he had been a

bird. The womenfolks, Emma, the daughter-in-law, and Mary, busied themselves fixing the beds, and when the task was done and there was silence again, Mary went out to the old man and awoke him very gently. She put her arm around his waist and led him to his room and put him to bed, in a bed soft and cosy like a mountain of cotton wadding. One night—and it was the last—the girl found the old man prone on the ground and as cold as ice.

After the old man died, Mary's position in the family became gradually modified. Sorrow already had entered her mind and was showing her the disillusionments of existence. The avarice of the colonists, the masters of the house, who were afraid that the life of their son and the girl under the same roof might lead into some love affair, clearly showed her that there must be a separation sooner or later. Yet, in spite of all the precautions she had taken, Mary became young Moritz Kraus' mistress. This love affair, like all love affairs in the colony, ought to have ended in marriage. Mary, at least, hoped so. But the cupidity of the old people did not allow things to take their ordinary course. They wanted their son to marry Emily Schenker, one of the richest maids of the place. It was not a mere distinction of classes which led them to separate Moritz from Mary, for among the colonists there are no class distinctions, as they all come from the same origin. It was only greed, the desire to have Moritz marry into the family of the Schenkers. And so, the parents, without even suspecting to what pass the relations between Moritz and the servant had come, decided to cut short a simple inclination which social prejudices might force into a permanent union. They

agreed to send their son to another colony, far from Jequitiba, where they got him a job as a laborer, hoping that he would forget his love, while they influenced the mind of the Schenkers to bring about the desired marriage.

Mary was astonished to see the docility of her lover, who agreed to his parents' plan even with pleasure. She was utterly abandoned. She had no means of communicating with Moritz nor strength of mind enough to demand a marriage. Who was she but a poor miserable servant who could be thrown at any moment into the street? How could she thwart with her person, with her desires and ambitions, the plans of the family? To the boy, that liaison was the simple consequence of living in company with a lass, nothing but the result of animal desires, and since they offered him another woman who had plenty of money, he was satisfied and willing to marry her.

By degrees Mary changed. She was not the same strong and supple servant. A great discouragement seized her, and from time to time—due not only to her mental distress but also to the mysterious derangement of her organism—she became dizzy, a cold sweat bathed her forehead, and nausea turned her stomach. When in the coffee plantation she was suddenly seized by these fits, she abandoned her task, threw herself on the ground in the scorching sun, her yellow hair mixed with the green of the jungle. Her bosom heaved and she opened her dress with a gesture of despair, her mouth grew watery, her half-closed eyes lost themselves in the blue of the sky and everything, earth and sky, rocked as if she had been at sea . . . It was with joy that she went

to the fair at the colony, thinking that she might meet Moritz. The lad, however, was not at the chapel nor at the ball at Jacob Muller's, and Mary, feeling more and more wretched, rebellious against her inexorable fate, had the painful experience of mixing with the joyous people, trying to smother her anxieties, keeping back her tears while she heard the phrases and pledges of other people's loves which reached her ears and increased her agony. That is why she did not forget her conversation with Milkau. His words, without significance, without meaning, empty even, were all the same permeated with an infinite kindness which fell upon her as a refreshing balsam . . . In her distress, in her despair, living within herself as if hypnotized, she clung to the remembrance of that conversation as if it had been an oasis in the immense wretched desert of her new life. Who was he? When would she see him again? . . . She knew that everything had passed as a bird passes through the air, but she was afraid to bring back to her memory those moments to which her feeble mind and infirm imagination, distorting everything in a sweet conspiracy, were giving, little by little, another meaning, another feeling, stronger, more expressive.

One morning the master of the house was going out to the neighboring plantation when a mulatto, riding a horse, came slowly up to him.

"Are you Franz Kraus?" asked the mulatto from his horse, unfolding a paper which he pulled out of his pocket.

The colonist replied in the affirmative.

"Well, then, take note of this." And he handed the paper to the colonist with a disdainful gesture.

Kraus looked the paper over but, although he had been thirty years in Brazil, he could not read Portuguese and he stood quite embarrassed.

"I can't read . . . What is it?"

"That's it! You live in this country all your lives and you stay always the same," grumbled the mulatto. "I have been going around here from house to house, and always the same thing: Nobody knows our language . . . What people!"

The colonist was offended by the insolent tone. He was going to answer in a rage, but the mulatto continued:

"Know then that this is an order from the court. It is an order from his honor the municipal judge, that you present an inventory of the estate of your father, Augusto Kraus. Wasn't that his name? The court sits here, to-morrow, at noon . . . The court will spend the night in your house. Get something ready to eat . . . the best. And the rooms . . . There are three judges, the lawyer and myself, for I am a sheriff and I also count."

The colonist, on hearing the word "court," pulled off his hat submissively, and stood as if he had been struck by lightning.

"Get everything ready for the inventory. Hide nothing, otherwise you will go to jail. Did you hear me? All right! Good bye! That's all I have to say. I don't leave you the summons because it would be no use to you . . ."

He spurred his donkey and went away at a slow trot in the direction of the road. Before passing the gate, he turned round towards the house. Kraus stood rooted to the same spot, turning his hat in his hands. The mulatto shouted to him:

"Board and lodging for five! Don't forget!"

He disappeared and the colonist remained in the same attitude for a while longer. The magic name of "court" had scared him. In the colony, when one spoke of tribunals and law suits they all were terrified. Law and Right there had an awesome prestige.

Franz Kraus had no heart to go to work. He went back into the house. His wife, seeing him so strangely dejected, dragged from him word by word the story of the summons. Afterwards, both were dumb the whole day. Mary tried to comfort them, but their terror, a terror as if death had visited their house, only increased her own sadness, depriving her of whatever energy she had to amuse her masters. It was afternoon before she could manage to remind them of the guests of the morrow and that it was to their own advantage to receive them in the best possible fashion. Realizing this, Franz got busy, and helped by Emma and the servant, began to fix up the house. The women killed chickens, prepared the black bread of the colonists, and got the house ready, searching all trunks forgotten in the rooms. Everything was done after consultation, for each one, as happens in days of sorrow, sought the advice of the others, seeking support for his cowardice.

The following morning the settlement was ready. Kraus, with his Sunday clothes on, was pacing nervously up and down the yard, awaiting the arrival of the magistrates. The women, also dressed in their best clothes, worked continuously in the kitchen.

It was past noon when the judges made their lordly entrance into the settlement. The magistrates rode excellent horses which, according to custom, had been

loaned by the rich merchants of Cachoeiro. The colonist ran to receive them, hat in hand, solicitous in helping them to get off their mounts. One of the judges gave him his horse, while the others tied theirs to the trees, and all of them dusted off their boots with their whips and stamped their feet loudly on the ground.

"I am dead tired!" exclaimed the municipal judge stretching himself.

"A swindle! Four hours' journey . . . You come because it is your duty, but we, myself and my colleague, who have nothing to do with this business, only came for the trip! Well, we must kill time some way . . . " said the judge, looking at the prosecutor with his monocle.

"Excuse me, but won't I have occasion to do anything?" asked the prosecutor, adjusting his blue spectacles.

"Why! That's right too, mister curator of orphans . . "

"There is nothing of that sort here . . . All of them, my dear doctor, are of age," interrupted an old mulatto of olive complexion with a mocking smile, whose features and restless expression made him look like a *maracaja* cat, hence the name they had given him. He was the lawyer.

"But, gentlemen, let us go in . . . The house is ours in the name of the law," said the judge, walking towards the door.

"But where is that idiot who is to give us the inventory?" arrogantly asked the prosecutor.

"The fool is all this time looking after our horses and leaves us here at God's mercy," explained the lawyer.

And they all walked noisily about the living room,

striking the furniture with their whips, and cursing or laughing at the poor pictures that hung on the walls, or turning their noses towards the kitchen whence came an appetizing smell of cooking.

"Delicious, that smell! It promises well!" exclaimed the judge.

"Come out here, pretty wench!" shouted the prosecutor, laughing. "Is there any one in there?"

Hearing all this racket, Kraus ran to the living room all confused, as if he had already broken the law, and stood like a servant awaiting orders.

"Bring some *paraty!*" ordered the lawyer. "We want it first class."

The colonist disappeared to come back in a little while with a decanter and one glass.

"Are there no more glasses in this house?" asked the lawyer disdainfully.

The colonist went out again and returned, muttering excuses and placed four glasses on the table.

"Come on, gentlemen!" shouted the prosecutor.

He took up the decanter and poured some liquid in the judge's glass.

"Doctor Itapecuru, being the most learned . . . "

And he went on filling the other glasses.

"Do you wish some?"

"Just a little, a mere trifle."

"There you are. Don't be afraid."

"Mister lawyer," continued the prosecutor, as he went on filling the glasses.

"But, Doctor Brederodes, you positively insult me with the glass almost full."

Laughing, quite happy, the "Maracaja" began to drink, smacking his lips.

"It tastes good . . . These foreign blackguards, the first thing they do in our country is to get acquainted with *paraty.*"

"My dear gentlemen, one question," said Brederodes. "Can an officer of justice drink before court?"

Standing at the door, the mulatto was waiting his turn. The others laughed without answering the question.

"Just to clarify your ideas, Doctor . . " And, somewhat suspicious, the mulatto came to the table extending his arm.

"There you are! Afterwards you'll forget to ring the bell and the suit will be null and void."

"No fear of that!"

At a gulp he swallowed the *paraty,* for fear he should lose it. A wave of blood darkened his face; his eyes, full of tears, became tinged with red.

"Isn't that fellow going to give us our lunch? It is getting kind of late . . . Look after that, lawyer. You are our majordomo," said Dr. Itapecuru, looking at his understrapper with his monocle.

The lawyer went into the next room in search of the colonist. When he returned he said:

"Let's go and have lunch. The fellow had everything ready. The best thing to do is to cut out our ceremonies and to take possession of the house, because if we wait for these people to make a move we'll never get anything done. Let's get out of here. Listen, if you wish to wash your hands, there's the place."

He pointed to the room; they all followed him into a

chamber with two tall beds with straw mattresses, soft and comfortable.

The municipal judge felt with great pleasure one of the beds:

"Ah! what a divine sleep one could have here!"

"But, what is this? Two beds only, and we are four!" observed the prosecutor with suspicion.

"Here, on this side there is another room." And opening a door in the partition, the lawyer showed it to them.

"We won't get out of here to-day, will we?" inquired the judge. "Well, then, I'm going to make myself at home. Manuel, give me my slippers."

The officer obeyed. The judge's colleagues followed his example, and when the three had changed their clothes and washed themselves, they walked back into the living room, where the lunch was ready for them, just as if they had been in their own homes.

They ate with a hearty appetite the colonial viands and drank beer in great quantities. The master of the house and the officer attended to the table, and it was only at the end of the meal that Mary, who had been all the time in the kitchen, came in with the coffee. The only woman amidst all these men, she felt shy and grew red, feeling instinctively the cruelty and lasciviousness of their looks.

"Hello there! . . . Fine fish . . . She is no piker," exclaimed the prosecutor with audacity.

"Keep quiet, Brederodes," observed the municipal judge, smiling, and at the same time he slapped him on the ribs.

Mary, all upset, placed a cup before each guest. They

thanked her, smiling maliciously, looking her straight in the eyes.

"Well! . . . even Dr. Souza Itapecuru . . . " observed the lawyer, speaking to the judge, who sat with the monocle in his hand and a stupid smile over his face.

"Oh! . . . I just wanted to see her . . . "

And the poor girl, when she finished her task, went away with uncertain, halting steps. While the others joked, amused at the scene, Brederodes remained absorbed in thought. Through his turbid eyes passed voluptuous images and he felt an impulse to possess this woman.

After lunch they rested, smoking; and when a great torpor was taking hold of the company, the lawyer woke them up, saying to the municipal judge:

"Doctor, your excellency does not open the court yet?"

Dr. Paul Maciel stretched himself yawning, as if he had been invited to some tiresome task.

"All right! Let's begin, Mr. Pantoja."

The "Maracaja" put on his spectacles, leaving them on his forehead while he arranged the table for business. The officer brought him a box, from which he extracted stationery and writing paraphernalia and a book of entries which he opened at a previously marked page. Seeking the best light, he sat down, and bending over the paper of folded margin began to write the terms of the suit. Paul Maciel sat at the head of the table, and with a fatigued and detached air started the routine business.

"Well, is the declaration ready?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then, open the court," ordered the municipal judge to the officer.

The latter, with a bell in his hand, went to the door and began to ring. He walked in front of the house, shouting in a nasal voice: "Court of the honorable municipal judge . . . Court of the honorable municipal judge . . . "

Under the scorching sun, in the great calmness of the world, these strident cries, swelling in volume in the universal silence, struck terror to the hearts of the colonists.

Afterwards, the owner of the house was called. He entered the living room confused and frightened. His eyes could not retain anything but a vague impression of the scene. He could not recognize his own house transformed into a court of justice by these men who had taken possession of it and where he seemed to be but a stranger and a prisoner. They ordered him to come near, and asked him several questions to which he replied in a quiet tremulous voice. When he declared that his father had been dead four years, the lawyer grumbled:

"Look at him . . . This hero is in possession of the estate, enjoying it as if it belonged to him, without giving any account to the courts or to the national treasury."

Paul Maciel, without showing the slightest interest in the proceedings, got up and said to the lawyer:

"Mr. Pantoja, you go on taking down the depositions."

And he went into the other room, where his colleagues were lazily enjoying a quiet smoke, stretched on the beds. He took off his coat and lay down like the rest.

In the living room, Pantoja continued to torture the colonist with questions, and from time to time, interrupted himself to threaten him:

"If you hide the least thing about the house, the land or the plantation, you'll get into trouble with the law . . . You people are mighty clever, but I am an old dog . . . I know the penalties for swindling the revenue . . . They are terrible penalties!" Thus he mixed his threats with technical names and filled the heart of the German with terror. The proceeding went on with only these two characters. At the door, the officer dozed, sitting on a chair, opening now and then his eyes, red with sleep, only to shut them again. From the other room there was no longer the murmur of conversation. Only the measured and monotonous snoring of some sleeper filled the house, where everything had subsided into the greatest peacefulness.

The lawyer took two hours to complete the inventory, using his own discretion, leaving blank the space for the signatures of the judge and the two appraisers, who were after his own fashion and whom he assumed to have been present, thus following a customary fraud which always reaped great profits for him.

When the interrogatory was finished, he dismissed the owner of the house who signed everything he was ordered to without being given the slightest explanation. Afterwards, Pantoja took off his spectacles and very quietly, on tip-toe, went to the room where the municipal judge was sleeping.

"All ready, doctor!"

Maciel was scared by the voice of his understrapper, who, leaning over him, looked at him with his sinister, devilish eyes.

"Ah! It is you, eh? All finished?"

"Everything. Where there is money everything goes

like silk. And there is plenty of it here . . . I have ready several summonses for the colonists of this neighborhood who have not made an inventory for a long time and are chewing up their inheritances without giving us any satisfaction. Come along, your honor, and sign these summonses, so that we may take the inventories here to-morrow. It does not amount to much, but . . . "

"Now, now, Mr. Pantoja, it would be better to leave those poor wretches alone. It does not amount to much; it would not pay us."

"Oh! no, doctor; everything that falls into the net is fish, and when you know how to squeeze the orange, you'll be surprised to see all the juice that comes out of it."

"Mr. Pantoja! . . . Mr. Pantoja!" exclaimed the municipal judge, as if he wanted to rein in the ignoble appetite of the lawyer. But withal, he got up, quite resigned and willing to please, and in his shirt sleeves and slippers went into the court to sign the summonses.

"Neves, get busy!" ordered the lawyer to the officer. And, reading the summonses, he shouted the names of the people who were to appear in court: "The widow Schultz . . . The widow Koelner . . . Otto Bergweg . . . They are all near. To-morrow at nine, here."

"All right, captain. I'll be back in a jiffy."

The officer put the summonses in his pocket and went out to saddle the donkey.

"What awful laziness!" exclaimed the municipal judge, walking into the room where the others were sleeping. "Lying abed on such a beautiful day! Come on, gentlemen, let us go out for a walk!"

And opening the windows, he let in a soft light,

deadened by the green leaves of the trees which surrounded the house.

The other two opened their eyes.

"What a fine nap!" said Maciel to the judge. And turning around to the prosecutor: "Hasn't your honor had enough sleep?"

"What is the use of a colonist if he is not going to support and entertain the law. Look here, Maciel, if I were in your place, if I were the judge of inventories, I would never leave the colonies."

"That's all very fine, Dr. Brederodes, but we must also do penance, the same as the priests. This is our religion . . . But you can't always do this with Dr. Maciel. You know how hard it was to get him to come along."

"I am sorry for them . . . " said the municipal judge.

"For whom, doctor?" inquired the lawyer.

"For these poor people, for these poor wretches."

"It is the law that is wretched. You ought to be sorry for your own self, for your family, for your countrymen. Isn't that right, judge?"

Itapecuru, who was standing combing his hair, parted the few locks he had, turned round with great deliberation and, taking up his monocle, joined in the discussion.

"You ask me? . . . I was municipal judge at Bahia for twelve years. You should go there and find out what a name I made for myself. I was a terror for inventories. I didn't miss one. I went from door to door in the name of the law. When I found out that someone had died, I took a note of it, and thirty days afterwards the summons made them shift pretty quick. Ah! we were all prosperous in the profession . . . I got the engine going. These young fellows to-day give themselves such airs . . .

Captain Pantoja, it is for lack of practical minds that the country is in such bad shape to-day. We belong to another school, we, the old ones."

There was in his words a subtle pleasure in addressing familiarly his subaltern, who was the political chief of the place.

"Excuse me, Dr. Itapecuru, please do not class me with the romantics," protested Brederodes with some vehemence. "The captain knows, I make the colonists move pretty fast."

Paul Maciel found himself excluded from their society; he remained in a disdainful attitude, looking at his colleagues, who were closely watched by the feline eyes of the lawyer. They all made fun of the municipal judge, and their laughter revealed their very souls, forming a grotesque company. One was the boisterous, coarse laughter of Itapecuru, another was the canine sharp-cutting laughter of Brederodes. The lawyer's laughter had no energy for noise; its force was spent in spreading itself over the face in a broad smile.

They all went into the yard and began to walk leisurely. The sun was declining and the afternoon was pleasant. The colonists, huddled together in the kitchen, dared not come out. The Law reigned absolutely in house and orange grove alike. In their shirt sleeves and slippers, the young magistrates enjoyed the beauty of the evening. The judge did not follow their bad example. He walked about in silk ulster and a gaudy tie, wearing a velvet cap. The lawyer had kept his alpaca coat, rather threadbare in places. On his head he wore a sort of solideum which hid his baldness.

They took a few turns, examining everything about the

house, and when they were under the orange trees loaded with yellow and red fruit, as the oranges were green or ripe, Paul Maciel remarked:

"The orderliness and cleanliness of this colony is admirable. There is nothing lacking, everything prospers, everything is charming . . . What a difference when you travel through the lands cultivated by the Brazilians . . . disorder, carelessness and laziness, sadness and misery. And yet, they talk against the immigrants!"

"Then, according to your theory," interrupted the prosecutor, "we should give everything to the Germans?"

"That's it . . . " commented the lawyer. "That follows logically from what Dr. Maciel says."

"Yes," assented the latter, "as far as I am concerned, I would not mind if the country were given to the foreigners if they could appreciate it better than we do. Don't you think the same, Dr. Itapecuru?"

The judge assumed a solemn air:

"Yes and no, as they say in the old scholasticks. There is no doubt that the Brazilians lack the analytical spirit. And when I say the Brazilians, I mean all of us. And what can you do without analysis? That has been the fate of Spain: she fell in the name of philosophy. She could not compete with an analytical people . . . "

"How is that, doctor?" shouted the municipal judge. "Then the United States . . . "

"A land of analysis, my friend. Listen, I am a fanatic as regards analysis. When I see an individual, I study all his habits. I don't need to know his ideas. One circumstance is enough for me. For instance, tell me what the man eats, and I conclude, without fear of being

in error, what are the psychological feelings of the person I have under observation. Ah! when I get hold of a man, I classify him . . . and he is mine!"

"The doctor is a terror," said Maciel, exchanging a knowing look with the prosecutor.

"Ah! I have great confidence in nations tutored in that school. When I was in France, I made it a point to go to the Chambre and admire the young spirits who are there examining revenues, analyzing taxes . . . They speak of Lamartine! . . . A man, a countryman of ours to boot, told me once in Paris: 'Listen to the orators of to-day . . . Dwarfs, they are! Remember Berryer, Lamartine. When they spoke here—we were in the Palais Bourbon—their voices were heard throughout the world . . . But our modern orators are not heard even at the Place de la Concorde.'"

"And what did you tell him?"

"You needn't think that I kept quiet," answered the magistrate with his stentorian laughter. "You'll see. Nothing of the kind, I answered, there is no inferiority there. In the old days, men spoke for the sake of talking. Only rhetoric, nothing of any moment. And their madness was so great that they paid for it with their tongues . . . Fools! Look now at the moderns, lads without beards, educated in the positivist science, full of the analytical spirit. Let us pay no attention to forms, let us look at the essence. That's the important thing. Do not pay any attention to how they say a thing, but pay attention to what they say."

"And then?"

"I squashed him, as you can readily imagine. Now, Brazil—to come back to our point—is dying through the

same spirit of rhetoric. It is our doom. To a certain extent, I agree with Dr. Maciel that we ought to give way to the stronger. I make way for the happier ones, as the poet says."

And Itapecuru suddenly repented of what he had said, because he saw in Pantoja's eyes that the lawyer condemned him for his ideas. He felt a cold shiver through his body and, stammering, attempted to modify his expressions, but the lawyer, full of venom, did not give him a chance.

"I am astonished to hear such language from two magistrates. There is no patriotism left, there is nothing left. You, gentlemen, may wish to sell your native land to the foreigner, you may sell it, but as long as there is a mulatto left in this Brazil, which, after all, belongs to us, things will not run as smooth as my learned doctors imagine."

And the mulatto closed his fists, clenched his teeth, and a sinister smile spread over his face.

"But, captain, listen," pleaded the judge, in a voice mellifluous with cowardice, "do not doubt for a moment my patriotic feelings. Who applauded more than I did the Marshal's answer?[1] With bullets, yes, my dear captain, with bullets, when they come."

"And the time is not very far," said the prosecutor. "We shall soon have occasion to show our patriotism."

"Yes, and we must unmask the traitors," said Pantoja, in a menacing fashion.

[1]That is what Marshal Floriano Peixoto said when foreign sailors threatened to land at Rio de Janeiro during the revolution of 1893 and some one asked how they should be received.

"And when will that famous moment come?" asked Maciel calmly and disdainfully.

"When that emperor of Germany, whom your honor admires so much," answered Brederodes, "sends his fleet to blockade our ports."

"And what will your honors do to prevent him? Does your honor think, Brederodes, that with our dwarfish army and our insignificant navy we can face anyone?"

Brederodes gave him a look and answered triumphantly:

"And the United States, my dear sir?"

"That's right, too," said Itapecuru, laughing. "Would the mighty America look on with her arms crossed?"

"I don't know to what extent the United States would mix in this affair . . . But, after all, what would we gain by their intervention? We would only exchange masters. That's all."

"And the Monroe doctrine? America for the Americans . . . "

" . . . of the North, as they themselves say," concluded Maciel, jokingly.

"Of North and South. Our fight will be against Europeans."

"No one can dominate a country if its people resist . . " interposed the lawyer. "With one box of matches you can finish up a whole army and all the European canaille."

"How is that, captain?" asked the judge courteously, awaiting the answer in an admiring attitude.

"How?" retorted the lawyer with fiendish pleasure. "Setting fire to the houses, to the cities, to the jungle. A gigantic bonfire which will scare the whole world!"

"I know all about it! Poland and the Transvaal

promised a lot . . . " observed the municipal judge ironically.

"The Poles are aristocrats and, therefore, of no use. The Boers were a miserable bunch who were afraid of what they would lose," exclaimed Brederodes, beside himself. "There is more love of money and of the mines there than love of honor. The Brazilians, that's another story. We have nothing to lose, fortunately, and that heartens the people."

"Well said, doctor. You are one of us."

"Captain, don't you ever doubt my sentiments," said the judge earnestly.

The lawyer shrugged his shoulders disdainfully.

"You gentlemen speak of independence," observed the municipal judge caustically, "but I don't see it. Brazil is, and has always been, a colony. Our regime is not a free one. We are a protectorate."

"And who protects us?" interrupted Brederodes, gesticulating with his monocle.

"Wait a minute, man. Listen. Tell me: where is our financial independence? What is the real money that dominates us? Where is our gold? What is the use of our miserable paper currency if it isn't to buy English pounds? Where is our public property? What little we have is mortgaged. The customs revenues are in the hands of the English. We have no ships. We have no railroads, either; they are all in the hands of the foreigners. Is it, or is it not, a colonial regime disguised with the name of free nation . . . Listen. You don't believe me. I would like to be able to preserve our moral and intellectual patrimony, our language, but rather than continue this poverty, this torpitude at which we have

arrived, it is better for one of Rothschilds' book-keepers to manage our financial affairs and for a German colonel to set things in order."

"You are a cynic . . . " shouted Brederodes, livid, his lips trembling.

There was a brief silence. The lawyer was enjoying the dispute. Itapecuru feared a fight, but Paul Maciel smiled with superiority.

"Call me what you wish; what you can't do is to deny the evidence of facts. A colony we are and we shall be . . . " he persisted coolly.

Brederodes reddened, and in an uncontrollable rage, retorted daringly:

"It will be a colony so long as there are yellow dogs like you!"

"Now then, man, don't get sassy," said Maciel, quietly, and taking up the trend of his speech, he continued:

"If in reality we are not within the sphere of action of a great nation, it is because we take advantage of the disputes between the great powers. The United States have cast their shadow on this continent, I know it, but some fine day, tired of preventing others from taking possession of our country, they will eat us up, as they did with Cuba."

"They say that Germany has her plans. They say . . . But my colleague knows that in such matters it is better not to say anything unless you feel perfectly sure of your remarks," pompously commented Dr. Itapecuru. And his egregious cowardice introduced a conciliatory element into the discussion.

"I can assert, without fear of being contradicted, that we are coveted by the ambitious Germans. The very

kaiser pays out of his own pocket missionaries and professors in Rio Grande and Santa Catharina."

"And what is the government doing about it?" asked Brederodes, and he answered his own question: "They fold their arms, and look after the elections and politics. What we need, captain, is to sweep away those crooks who take hold of the government to enrich themselves, and then forget the poor people, while the foreigner is all the time making money out of our wretchedness."

"The elections are near . . . Why don't you write a manifesto?" proposed the municipal judge.

"This has nothing to do with manifestos or elections. These are things which interest only your party and your friends," answered the lawyer, taking seriously what Maciel had said.

"That's what ruins us," replied Brederodes, "that electoral mania. It is through the political parties that the country is going to wreck."

"And they even take advantage of the foreign vote," added Paul Maciel. "Because those Germans will never be Brazilians, and they are the best voters Captain Pantoja has here."

The lawyer was quite embarrassed in his double capacity as chief of his party, in the neighborhood, and as patriot.

"But those Germans aren't doing anything. They are quiet, respectable people . . . A flock of sheep . . . you can take my word for it."

Brederodes burst out laughing, and said sarcastically:

"There's where the danger lies. The Germans are a bunch of crooks. They come to our country quietly, respectfully. We take advantage of them, of their

numbers, of their money. They keep developing, in the dark, and some fine day they'll jump on our necks and conquer the country. Captain, quit talking, fire on the foreigner every time. Be a patriot always. Shoot!"

Paul Maciel seemed to have lost interest in the discussion, and he slowly walked towards the house, pulling some leaves from the orange trees, nervously scenting their perfume. His companions followed him, deeply interested in their subject.

"It is the eternal question in Brazilian life," thought Maciel. "To be or not to be a nation . . . A painful time in which men play with the destinies of a country . . . Bad luck to the weak! . . . What can we do to resist the wolves? With the innate kindness of our race, with our natural weakness, with our careless inertia, how can we oppose those who are coming? . . . Everything will come to an end. Everything will be transformed . . . Poor Brazil! . . . It was a miserable attempt at nationality. Patience, that's all . . . And what good will the United States do us? They will always be our boss. This continent is destined to be the prey of beasts . . . South America . . . Ridiculous . . . But, is there no salvation? Is there not a god or a force which will parry the blow that threatens us? . . . Ah, well . . . *Mea culpa,* and that's all . . . We are getting what we deserve . . . After all, perhaps it will be better . . . The land will prosper . . . A better government . . . more police . . . and that's all . . . Is it worth it? Is it worth living, to have more police? And our language? our race . . . our people . . . degraded, if you like . . . mean, yes, weak, almost exhausted . . .

but lovable, beautiful, and beloved, in spite of all, because it is ours, ours . . . Oh! very much ours!"

Walking thus, they reached the house, where dinner was waiting for them. They sat at the table, and the officer, who was back from delivering the summonses, helped to serve dinner. Mary came from her hiding place and moved about the room, continually molested by the men. The poor girl, all the same, seemed cold and indifferent to the bold, immoral phrases which the pillars of the law addressed to her. When the dinner was finished, the magistrates sat outside the house, and as the infinitude of stars come out into the night, they continued their conversation.

The judge was very anxious to correct the impression as to his lack of patriotism which his previous remarks had made in the mind of Pantoja, fearing the latter's political influence, and he returned to the subject.

"My nationalism, captain, is very old. Ever since I attended the academy, I have been rabid in matters of patriotism. Ah! I have never yielded."

"But that was in the old days; it seems that to-day . . " interrupted Maciel for fun.

"To-day, with my age," answered Itapecuru, stubbornly, putting on his monocle, "my patriotism has doubled. I never give in to the foreigner. Between ourselves, I am even a jacobin."

"But you had a good time in Europe, and certainly, if you could, you would always live there," observed Maciel.

"I would never abandon my native land. I don't deny that Europe has some very fine things. Those who, like your honor, feel ashamed of being Brazilians, should turn their eyes to the old world. It would do you good, believe

me. My patriotic feelings were weakened, I will admit, but when I saw how decadent Europe is, I felt proud of being a Brazilian and my patriotic ardor returned. It isn't for nothing that my name is Itapecuru. It is the brand of patriotism which I have from the academy."

"How is that?" asked Brederodes.

"When Gonçalves Dias e Alencar gave the warning cry for Brazil, for the natives, we, the students, answered in our own way . . . My name was Manuel Anthony de Souza. That's all. Souza smacked of Galician.[1] So, I added Itapecuru . . . Manuel Anthony de Souza Itapecuru . . . It was a general movement. Each one took a native name, hence the Tupinambas, the Itabaiaras, the Gurupis."

When, later on, the conversation languished, the judge asked his companions:

"Gentlemen, how do you propose to kill time? Couldn't we have a game of cards?"

Paul Maciel was not afraid of time, and unlike his companions, he was happier when left alone with his thoughts.

"Don't count me in, doctor. I am tired and I am going to rest. Good night! I'll wait for you in the room."

The others, when Maciel had gone, began to tear him to pieces.

"It's a pity," said Itapecuru; "he takes no interest in anything."

"Well, he isn't much of a loss," added Brederodes. "He has nerve enough, though, but what has he done, after all?"

"Yes, let him talk, so that we'll find out what he has

[1] That is to say, from Galicia, in Spain.

up his sleeve," remarked the lawyer. "I can tell you one thing: he knows nothing about his business . . . If some fine day I write to the papers in the capital, we are going to have a good laugh. It will be pretty and clean."

"All he can do is to run down Brazil and curse all our things," said Dr. Itapecuru, accentuating his words for the benefit of Lawyer Pantoja, who, in turn, added:

"But he does not refuse the money at the end of the month. That doesn't stink, although it is Brazilian."

"Maybe when this country is German, he will receive twice as much from his masters," said the prosecutor.

"Is it true that he never lets go the German grammar?"

"Yes, he is getting ready to govern us," answered Brederodes.

They laughed heartily and got up to go and have their game. The judge always carried a pack of cards in his bag when he went on one of those judicial trips on which he had nothing to do, and which he undertook simply for company's sake.

The three played for some time, until the prosecutor, pretending to be tired, gave it up.

"In that case, captain, I challenge you to a *bisca*," the judge hastened to say, unwilling to stop playing, and fearing the ennui which always tormented him.

"All right, doctor, get ready for a hammering," answered Pantoja among the clouds of smoke from his cigar.

Brederodes, in the yard, called the officer in a low voice:

"Neves, Neves!"

"Right here, sir!"

The officer was lying dozing on the turf, and he got up

half dazed. The prosecutor gave him an order, which he proceeded to carry out. Brederodes, alone, walked up and down the yard, agitated by lascivious desires. The officer soon returned.

"Well?" inquired the prosecutor, when he saw him.

"Sorry, doctor. Nothing doing."

"How's that?"

"The doe is as wild as could be. If you had only seen the look she gave me . . . She didn't answer me, as if she had anything to lose . . . Didn't your honor notice that she is well on?"

Brederodes burst into a passion. The blood rushed to his head, he clenched his teeth, and his evil eyes shone in the night like those of a cat.

"She'll pay me for that. You'll see. There'll be hell to pay . . . Damn these Germans!"

"Don't let that worry you . . . I'll go again and try to fix the thing up." And he disappeared towards the house to escape the fury of the prosecutor.

The latter remained all alone, as if in a trance, planning revenge. Everything was quiet in the house. The two players, dead with sleep, had finally given up the cards and had retired to their rooms; the colonists gave no indication of life and the officer showed no sign of coming back. Tired of waiting for him, his rage somewhat abated, Brederodes decided to go to his room. There, his companion—the lawyer—was snoring. He laid down on his bed quietly and watied until the night should grow older. His blood became impetuous with desire, and through his neurotic mind passed disturbing and sensuous visions. He got up stealthily, and, in the light of an oil lamp which burned in the living room, went into the hall-

way. When the light ceased, in a turn of the passage, he proceeded in the dark, feeling the walls with his hands. When he came to a door, he stopped and listened, trying to find out by some sign, by some movement, if it were Mary's room. Suddenly, he thought he had found it . . . He tried to open the door but it was locked. "Blackguard!" thought the prosecutor, bursting with rage. He felt a strong desire to knock down the door, but a faint realization of the falseness of the position in which he found himself, controlled him.

"Perhaps this isn't the one . . . This must be the room of the old couple."

And with this hope, he went on trying. There was another door opposite . . . He listened. Not a sound . . . He took hold of the latch, lifted it, and at a gentle push, the door opened with a creak. Brederodes' heart beat with joy. He heard somebody moving in the room and the scared voice of an old woman asked:

"Is that you, Mary?"

Brederodes withdrew into the passage, leaving the door open. On tiptoe he went to his room, which he found without any trouble, guided, no doubt, by the instinct of self-preservation.

Next morning, at nine o'clock, the officer tolled the bell, announcing to Kraus' neighbors that court was open for the inventories.

In the living room, the municipal judge and the lawyer occupied their places at the table. At the window, with their backs to it, the prosecutor and the judge were talking to each other. Two women and a man, surrounded by children, stood against the wall, watching the proceed-

ings with fearful eyes, and expecting to be called at any moment.

"Dr. Brederodes, your honor has to act, as curator of orphans, in three inventories. There are some poor wretches who need your legal protection," said the lawyer jokingly.

The prosecutor smiled with satisfaction and sat down at the table.

"Could I not have a share in this feast?" asked Dr. Itapecuru, with an idiotic smile.

"Your honor knows that we only need your blessing when the business is done. Everybody will get a slice of the cake . . . "

"All right! In that case, as I have nothing to do, I'll take a turn while you prepare the meal."

He put on his hat, looked majestically through his monocle at the summoned colonists, and went out of the room, while those who remained in it smiled at him.

"Widow Schultz!" called Pantoja.

After some hesitation, a peasant woman, tall and still young, came near.

"How long has your husband been dead?" asked the lawyer, beginning the interrogatory in spite of the apathy of the municipal judge.

"Two years."

"Always the same . . . Nobody complies with the law; they all inherit here without any ceremony . . . This has got to be stopped. I'm telling you."

Then he took down the deposition of the widow who, sad and frightened by the judicial machinery, answered everything submissively. The municipal judge and the prosecutor, having no interest in the court, got up and

went to the window. The woman had to stand the grossest insolences from Pantoja every now and then, and felt very much upset.

"How many coffee plants have you in your settlement?"

"Five hundred . . . "

"Is that all? Come on, don't tell me any lies . . . or we'll fix you up at Cachoeiro."

"But, sir, I may have more or less. I didn't count them one by one . . . My late husband thought he had four hundred . . . I have planted about one hundred in the last two years."

"All right, I'll fix the number."

And without saying a word to the interested party who, after all, could not even read Portuguese, he wrote down:

"One thousand five hundred coffee plants."

And Pantoja continued putting down the items of the inventory, and followed his old habit of increasing the value of the estate in order to swell his own earnings. After a while, he said to the woman:

"You may go now. In two weeks, you come to pay the costs. Three thousand reis. Do you hear?"

The woman was going away, greatly relieved.

"Hold on a minute! . . . My goodness! I didn't tell you the most important thing," observed the "Maracaja" in a jovial way.

He wrote down several figures on a piece of paper, added them up, and finally said to himself: "One hundred and eighty thousand reis."

"That's right. Listen: bring with you the money to pay the costs. Three thousand reis. Did you hear?"

"Three thousand reis! . . . Three thousand reis! . . . But . . . sir . . ."

"Never mind 'sir', or anything else. We don't deal out charity here . . . And you may consider yourself jolly happy that there has been no law suit. If you had had to hire a lawyer, you would have been in a mess . . . Three thousand reis. No lip, keep your mouth shut. If I find out that you go around talking about this business, you'll have to deal with me."

The woman looked at the two magistrates with pleading eyes. But they remained indifferent, continuing their conversation. Dumbfounded, and without anyone to take her side, the poor woman left the room, her head hanging down. Pantoja called the colonist whose turn was next. After going through the same performance with him, he called a woman who was the last on the list.

The woman, dressed in mourning, small, young, with a stupid, distracted air about her—the air of wretchedness itself—came near him. A five year old daughter hung on to her dress, and she carried in her arms another one, whose golden head shone on the dark clothes of her mother.

Paul Maciel, tired of standing up, went over to sit down at his place and evinced some interest in the group.

"How long have you been a widow?" he asked.

"Two months . . . " answered the young woman.

"How long have you been in Brazil?"

"Hardly a year . . My husband, who already suffered with his chest, didn't last very long . . . "

"You were making a start in life, weren't you?"

"We just had time to build the house and break up the

ground for the plantation . . . There was nothing planted."

"It's very sad! And how do you manage to pull along?" he asked kindly.

The woman remained pensive, without answering.

"Naturally, you have some friend who takes your husband's place," said Pantoja to revenge himself for the kindness shown by the judge to the poor woman. For, accustomed as he was to do everything himself, he considered the action of the judge as nothing short of a trespass on his prerogatives.

Paul Maciel, in order to avoid discussion with his subordinate, who was feared by all of them, pretended not to hear.

The woman finally said:

"I am trying to sell my own house, and I am going to hire myself as a servant in some other settlement."

"It seems to me, Mr. Pantoja, that, after all, there is no need of making an inventory," observed Maciel "You'd better let her go in peace."

"Why should I?" asked the lawyer, trembling with passion. "Is your honor competent enough to pass judgment on this matter? That's a fine one . . . What do you say to this, Dr. Brederodes? You are the party chiefly interested in this matter . . . This is a case of orphans."

"I don't agree to letting the inventory go," answered the prosecutor eagerly. "And if your honor does not wish to act ex-officio, I must insist upon the inventory."

Paul Maciel did not know what to do before the attitude assumed by the other two. His own inclination was to suspend, to throw into jail that insolent lawyer, his legal subordinate; to dispense with the inventory, and

on top of that, give the poor woman some money, out of his own pocket, and send the poor wretch away with kind words. But in order to put his good intentions into execution, what an enormous store of energy, of nervous fluid he would have to use up! . . . Would it be worth while? His feeble forces betrayed him and his keen mind pictured a struggle with his two colleagues, with the lawyer who was a political boss in the locality, an inglorious fight in which he was bound to be the loser . . . Judges change, but lawyers remain.

"All right, let us fix this up. We'll just make a list, instead of a formal inventory of the estate," he proposed in a tired voice. Pantoja looked at him triumphantly from top to toe.

"That is merely a novelty to evade the law . . . here is the official form, and your honor can't show me differently. An inventory is an inventory, doctor," answered the lawyer, taking possession of the ground which his superior had given up.

"Man," said the prosecutor, "don't be foolish, Mr. Maciel. What harm is there in making the inventory?"

"What harm? . . . to force that poor woman to pay more costs . . . is that not enough?"

"Costs are the oil for the machinery of the law . . . " gleefully commented Pantoja.

And so the inventory was made just the same as the others, with the same extortions and violence. At last, when the lawyer demanded from the woman two hundred reis, the poor wretch began to cry.

"Let's have no scenes . . . You would have the law work for nothing . . . That's going too far."

"But I can't raise all that money."

"Sell your house."

"Yes, my dear sir, I am going to sell the house to pay my husband's debts, the expenses of the illness, and then I'll work to pay the new debts."

"The law first . . . If you aren't willing to pay us, you shall not sell the house, nor the land either. I'll take the papers with me and we shall see."

"Captain Pantoja . . . " began the municipal judge.

"Mind your own business," interrupted the lawyer in a rage. "Your honor is too young. You don't understand this. You were born yesterday, but they can't fool me . . . Tears! . . . They all cry."

And turning to the woman:

"Go away. A young woman can always get money . . "

He laughed with a dry laugh. Dazed, as if walking in her sleep, the woman left, trailing her children behind.

After lunch, the horses were saddled and ready for the departure. The day was suffocating, with a powerful sun that silenced everything. The judges, accompanied by the officer and the master of the house, went to their horses. Pantoja came up to the group, and, pointing to the colonist, remarked to the prosecutor:

"I haven't had a chat with our friend yet."

And he slapped Franz Kraus on the shoulder. As the colonist was startled by this sign of intimacy, he added with an ironic courtesy:

"Very much obliged for your hospitality, brother . . . but we have a little business to settle."

"What is it?" asked the frightened colonist.

"Our costs, my friend. You have plenty . . . You'd better loosen up right away. I don't like to give anyone credit . . . Fetch along . . . Four hundred thousand reis."

The man staggered, as if he were going to fall. A

kind of vertigo seized him; his voice died in his throat with a spasm. The lawyer pushed him gently, saying in a joking way:

"Go on, friend, don't be scared. It might be worse . . . Counsel, suits, fines . . . "

Under the lawyer's pressure, the colonist moved towards the house like an automaton.

"Well done, captain. You are a man," observed the judge flatteringly.

"That's nothing," answered the lawyer with pride.

After a short delay, which made them impatient, old Kraus reappeared. His eyes were irritated and his cheeks red and swollen. He had been crying.

Pantoja took the money and counted it. The colonist looked at him, downhearted and dumb.

"All right! Everything's settled now. Let's be good friends. Come to my office for the papers at the end of the month."

He jumped on his horse. The cavalcade started.

"I congratulate you," said Itapecuru to Paul Maciel; "you'll reap a fine harvest."

The municipal judge looked at him with disgust, but did not answer.

In the middle of the yard, with his hat in his hands and his head exposed to the sun, the colonist stood, watching with his dull eyes the Law as it disappeared in the road . . . And when it had vanished and everything had returned to a profound quietude, he stood for a long time with his eyes fixed in the same direction . . . Suddenly, in a fit of intense, cowardly rage, he murmured, looking fearfully around him:

"Thieves!"

CHAPTER VII.

MARY continued her wretched existence in the house of Franz Kraus. Despairing of Moritz's return, closely watched by the avaricious and inquisitive eyes of the old couple, she lived like one demented, performing her household duties mechanically, unable to sleep night after night with the anxiety of trying to avoid the dishonor which indifferent and inexorable time was bringing closer and closer. At times a great desire seized her to flee, to run away, unknown, strong, free from the prejudices of others, and wait until time would bring her salvation and consolation for the future, from her own womb. At other times she sadly languished, prey to a great fear, to an immense and painful shame, and longed for death. But she was so frail and timid that she had not enough strength to make a resolution, and allowed herself to remain in the house, dwindling away in the same agony and despair . . .

The old couple had no longer any doubt as to the poor girl's condition, and as they watched her move about the house with slow steps, transformed by the bitterness of maternity, they felt a deep hatred against her, for they considered her an obstacle to the satisfaction of their ambitions. They saw that the marriage of their son with the heiress of the Schenker had been spoiled; it was too late, they said with discouragement. And now they

spent the days close together, whispering vengeance and planning how to get rid of Mary. But theirs were not inventive heads, not even for evil. They remained irresolute, afraid of law suits, overpowered by the infinite growing fear which the visit of the Law had left in their hearts. And in this way, life in the house was a torture for everybody. They did not talk any longer; time did not pass unnoticed and they did not feel that indifference for existence which is its only charm. There were squabbles and insults every minute, and the old couple became more and more exacting with the poor girl, obsessed with the wicked idea that she would leave the house. They gave her little to eat and doubled her work, and it was with neurotic despair that they saw the girl standing her hardships stoically, without a movement of rebellion, going about like a somnabulist.

Thus these wretches lived for a time. And one morning, Mary, tired of working, her hands trembling and her body bathed in cold sweat, dropped a plate. It broke into a thousand pieces. Old Emma was furious, and in a fit of rage, started to insult the girl. Franz ran to the kitchen, and, his hatred getting the better of him, advanced towards Mary in a threatening attitude. The poor girl, scared at their shouts, began to walk backwards towards the door. It was then that Emma yelled:

"Get out of here, wretch! . . . Away with you! . . . Go! . . . Go! . . . "

Her husband, seized by the same rage, took up an axe and brandished it, threatening the girl with death.

"Get out, you trash! . . . Get out, you slut! . . . "

Mary ran to her room for shelter. The old man caught up with her and with a violent push prevented her from

reaching the door. The girl, livid, panting, stuck her back against the wall, protecting her womb with her hands. Franz stood in front of her, gnashing his teeth, foaming at the mouth. Emma took the girl by the arm, squeezing it violently.

"Get out of here, pest!" she ordered. "Take your rags with you, slut . . . Get out of here! . . . "

The girl obeyed mechanically. Though the rage of the old folks had been very sudden, it did not abate in the least, and the poor girl gathered up her clothes under a volley of vile oaths and curses.

"Out of here! . . . " Emma continued to yell in a passion.

Mary went out into the yard, and urged on by the violent shouts, walked steadily, without hesitation, on towards the unknown. Her golden hair, loosened on her shoulders, reflected the sunlight through the green foliage . . . She never said a word nor uttered a complaint.

She went along like a walking statue, and her big, clear eyes had the crystalline, dull lustre of a mirror . . .

Behind her, Emma's voice followed her like the barking of a dog.

"Get out, wretch! . . Get out, curse of our home! . . Get out, you damned wretch!"

Mary walked along for some time, unconsciously, aimlessly. Under her great and deep emotion, her ideas became paralyzed as her dilated vision gathered and retained the small details of the landscape. A broken tree, a green coffee plantation, a ray of light, an animal that moved in the dark fastness of the jungle, a thread of water, everything was taken in by her sharpened

retina. And she walked along until the energy which sustained her nerves gave out, and she had a sensation of discouragement which hindered her steps and awoke her consciousness . . . She found herself expelled from the house which had been her home, her garden, her world! . . . To her memory came pictures of her childhood . . . Everything destroyed . . . Everything finished in a burst of rage, the meaning of which she could not well understand . . . She wanted to return to the house, without any ill feeling, with a smile which would dispel the frightful nightmare . . . To go back! to go back! But as she began to retrace her steps, she realized, in her heart-rending desolation, that she was raving when she imagined that it would be a simple matter to restore what had been destroyed for ever. Standing with her head hanging down on her bosom, her eyes fixed on her own body, she began to cry.

A vague fear of not being able to find a home, a shelter in that desert, impelled her to continue silently on her way. She sought the most solitary places, for a feeling of shame drew her away from the houses she knew.

She made up her mind to appeal to the pastor of Jequitiba. Since the morning of the mass, she had not seen him, but she had retained a favorable impression of his timid, countrified appearance. In her little soul, the soul of a simple rustic woman, Mary saw a ray of hope, which she followed confidently. When after two hours' march the girl saw the church and the manse, a shiver of terror shook her body. But her hesitation lasted only an instant, for her absolute destitution made her unusually bold.

She began to climb the hill. The landscape was clear,

and the two little buildings on the summit increased the sadness of the solitude. They looked like human habitations lost in the desert, they reminded her of isolation, sacrifice, abandon . . . As Mary ascended, she remembered the last feast of the colony, and at the remembrance, her mind filled the now empty and silent expanse of the hills and the valleys with people, with voices and gestures, with movement and life. She also recalled the few instants when she had seen Milkau, and carried away by her recollections, she thought of the music of the harmonium which had played while he was dozing . . .

When she arrived at the summit, she saw the ground tilled and ready for the garden, which was the new pastor's passion. Through an open door came voices of children spelling monotonously, in a sing-song. It was the school taught by the pastor's sister. Mary passed on, her head hanging down, and the stronger, strident infantile voices shook her with fear. She looked sidewise and saw a dark room, a woman in black away at the back, a black cross wrapped up in a sudarium on one of the walls, and fair heads of children turning curiously towards her. On she went, and before the closed door of the house, she trembled still more. From within, no sound came to break the voices of the children as they continued their monotonous, tireless spelling . . . Mary wanted to flee, but the fear of solitude, of the deserted hills, of the quietude of that house, took away her strength . . . Bathed in cold sweat, exhausted for a moment, she dropped her bundle of clothes on the ground and leant against the wall. Then, in a new fit of courage, with a nervous impulse, she rang the bell, which sounded alarmingly in the universal silence.

The pastor's wife came to the door, scared by the noise, an expression of fear on her face which struck terror in Mary's heart. At last, after confused explanations, she went in to speak with the pastor, who in a short while came into the room where Mary was waiting for him.

When Mary saw him, she stood petrified. The man, erect like a soldier and dressed like a gardener, had a surprisingly sweet voice which did not match his rustic appearance.

"What do you wish, my daughter?"

Mary did not answer. She fixed her eyes on the ground, blushing and trembling. Then, big tears rolled down her cheeks.

"Come on, my girl, what has happened to you? . . . " asked the pastor's wife gently.

"I . . . I . . .want . . . lodgings . . . " answered the wretched girl, sobbing.

The pastor stood confused, for the girl's petition seemed very strange to him.

"Haven't you got a home, or a situation . . . ? We don't require any more servants," said he, speaking always in a sweet voice that came from his chest—as big as a bull's—like the bleating of a sheep.

Mary remained dumb. The pastor's wife went over to her and clapped her on the shoulder.

"What happened to you? Did you lose your job?"

At these marks of sympathy, Mary let her tears flow freely. The people of the house, wishing to find out a little more about the girl, tried to make her feel at ease and asked her more questions. Little by little the girl calmed down and with instinctive obedience answered

them amidst her tears. Outside, there was a joyous racket of childish voices that gradually died down as the children scattered down the side of the hill. It was the happy shout of freedom . . .

The pastor's sister, rustic and martial like himself, came into the room. Her brother explained the matter to her, and the woman, stern and silent, faithful to her habit of never asking questions, waited till everything was made clear to her. The pastor was afraid of her, and she had him under her thumb, frightened him with religious rules. In the house, the pastor's wife was but a mere shadow of her husband, and the authority of her sister was never questioned.

"Come on," said the pastor, with a knowing look, exchanging glances with his sister, "come on. You haven't told me yet why you left the Kraus house . . . How can I take you without knowing all about you?"

"They did not want me any longer . . . I was thrown out."

"Oh! Oh! That's a serious business! What did you do, my daughter, that they should treat you with such severity?"

The teacher, who was observing the girl with inquisitive eyes, interrupted the interrogatory with a dry laugh. The pastor's wife, fearing one of her sister-in-law's outbursts, got up instinctively to leave the room. But curiosity was too much for her childish soul.

"Away with this farce!" exclaimed the teacher in a mocking tone. "I know very well why your employers, who must be honest people, threw you out of their house . . . You had some fun, I suppose? And why do you cry now? Are we to pay for your pleasures? Look

here, woman, since you have started on that road, you shouldn't have come here. This is a very respectable house, this is the house of God. Go your own way . . . Go on . . .Get out of here . . . "

The pastor's sister was burning with a great hatred, the greatest of hatreds, the hatred that comes from sexual feelings. Was she not an incomplete woman, an untilled field, a sealed tower, while the other, this mean wretch, was the consoler, the friend of man?

"Oh! lady, what harm have I done you? . . . "

The pastor got up solemnly from his chair, and with that cursed, sweet voice of his, said to the girl:

"In our house there is no room for pleasure; here we only love and worship God. Go, redeem yourself. Remember that all sins have their punishment. Yours is a horrible sin. The wrath of the Lord falls upon . . . "

Mary stopped crying. She thought they had all gone mad. The pastor's wife looked at her with a pitying expression. But hers was a cold, inane, timid sort of pity. Mary returned her look and perhaps in her heart —for the heart understands everything—she felt the greatest pity for that shadow of a woman. The pastor pushed her gently towards the door, giving her a few paternal pats on the back.

And as the girl gradually left the house, his voice assumed a gentle tender tone.

"Go, my daughter . . . my poor daughter. What a pity it is! How I suffer at not being able to keep you in my house . . . If this place were not sacred . . . If God's dwelling were not an awesome place! . . . Go, my daughter, go!"

And when Mary found herself on top of the hill,

blinded by the sunlight, hallucinated, the pastor's voice continued to sing in her ears:

"Go, my daughter! Take care as you go down hill. Take care along the road! This place is so lonely . . . "

Then the door closed, and all that was human there disappeared in the vast silence. When Mary found herself alone, she began to run down the hill, impelled by fear and shame, and in her fever she imagined that the hills were closing upon her and that she was sinking among them. When she reached the cross roads, at the bottom of the hill, she started in the direction of Santa Theresa. In her innocent heart, in her confused mind, the terrible scenes of that day were mixed up as in a nightmare. It was the almost physical suffering of a rudimentary soul; and what urged her on was a vague fear of the night, of the solitude of the jungle. The sun was setting; the hillsides and peaceful valley, free at last from the fierce light of the day, rested in the dim twilight. Things assumed a different expression; the shadows stretched themselves lazily on the velvety, green grass, as if they felt sleepy; the breeze cooled the feverish earth; birds passed in long flights through the crystalline limpidity of the air . . .

At the end of the valley Mary saw several settlements nestled in the foliage. Smoke issued from the chimneys, and at that hour, in every house of the Brazilian jungle, the families of the immigrants were gathered around the tables waiting for their suppers. . . . The poor girl sat discouraged at the side of the hill, her eyes riveted on the houses. Human voices reached her ears, and she listened to them as if they had been some sweet, soothing music . . . She felt very weak, not alone from her walk,

or the anguishing fatigue of her maternity, but with the emptiness of hunger . . . there . . . in the opulent land of Canaan . . . She felt like jumping on to the houses that lay at her feet, attracted by the human beings gathered there. And then, impelled by a violent desire to partake of the shelter, the warmth and the love of her fellow beings, Mary, forgetting her desperate situation, without the least feeling of shame and carried away by hunger, got up and ran towards the group of houses.

When she reached the place, there was nobody outside. The dogs received her with a hostile chorus, but she went on through the yard, and her mad calmness made the animals entirely harmless. Some people came out of the first house to see the cause of the disturbance. Men and women came to the door, still chewing their food and annoyed at being disturbed. When the girl came up to them, she seemed to wake up; she felt afraid and did not know what to say. They assailed her with questions, and as the poor wretch, in her confusion, answered incoherently, some one said:

"She must be crazy!"

A panic spread suddenly, and they all thought the poor girl must be some dangerous wandering lunatic. The women ran into the houses; the men seized some sticks and advanced towards her, trying to frighten her away.

"Away with you, you lunatic! away with you!"

Mary retreated stupified, without knowing exactly what was happening. The dogs barked excitedly and the people from the other houses came out and joined their neighbors, forming a wild, deafening chorus.

"Get away, lunatic! Lunatic!"

The girl ran breathlessly. The men, with their dogs, chased her furiously for a few moments, shouting:

"Lunatic! Lunatic! . . . "

Mary reached the road, but still continued to run desperately in a superhuman effort to get away from the place. In her flight, she reached a small forest which was crossed by the road. The light of the evening was almost distinguished there. Mary stopped, afraid to enter into the darkness, and standing at the opening in the forest, shivering with fear, she looked into the trees until her eyes discovered the other door of light away in the distance. Through the covered way, enormous blue and brown butterflies flew haltingly and lazily . . . Mary remained at the edge of the forest. She had no courage to go in or to run away. A profound and inexplicable attraction for that dark and gloomy spot kept her as if she were hypnotized . . . The bundle of clothes fell from her tremulous hands. Exhausted, terrified at finding herself caught by night in such a solitude, abandoned by all, she let herself fall at the foot of a secular tree, and with dilated eyes and sharpened ears, watched and listened to the things around her . . . The power of her vision seemed to increase as the darkness mysteriously enveloped the forest like the vaporous, impalpable breath of the Earth . . . Her perturbed imagination made her feel that all nature was moving to suffocate her. The shadows increased. Colossal, black clouds rolled through the sky towards the abyss of the horizon . . . In the fields everything assumed monstrous forms in the feeble twilight . . . The mountains rose gigantic from the earth with awesome profiles . . . The roads stretched themselves through the fields, acquiring the mobility of

snakes . . . The isolated trees whined in the wind, as if singing some fantastic psalm for the nature that was dead . . . Frightsome nocturnal birds screeched their omens in funeral notes. Mary wanted to flee, but her tired limbs disobeyed the dictates of fear and let her lie there, the prey of anguishing despair.

Glow worms began to light the forest with their divine flashes . . . Up above, the diminutive stars began to shine one after the other . . . The glow worms multiplied within the forest and silently, innumerable, they sprang from the trunks of the trees, as if they were giving forth flowers of light . . . The unfortunate girl, seized by a heavy torpor, was gradually overcome by sleep . . . Nature seemed to have recovered from her first fears on entering the darkness of night. What had been vague and indistinct in the scheme of things assumed a vivid clearness. The mountains resumed their perpetual immobility; the trees, scattered in the fields, lost their aspect of tortured phantasms . . . In the limpid air, everything returned to its impassible appearance. The glow worms were no longer flying, and myriad upon myriad of them covered the trunks of the trees, which seemed studded with diamonds and emeralds. It was a glorious and blinding illumination within the tropical forest, and the fires of the glow worms suffused everything with a green light over which shone flashes of yellow, orange and light blue. The forms of the trees seemed to be wrapped in a zodiacal phosphorescence. The glow worms studded the leaves, and here, there and everywhere shone emeralds, sapphires, rubies, amethysts and other precious stones which guard in their bosoms sparks of divine, eternal colors. Under the marvelous

light, a religious silence reigned over the world. The birds of ill omen no longer screeched of death; the wind, which disturbs and agitates things, was now dumb . . . Everywhere the soothing calmness of the light . . . Mary was surrounded by the glow worms that came to cover the tree at the foot of which she was sleeping. She was lying absolutely motionless and the glow worms circled her head with a golden halo. The transparent flesh of the sleeping girl was the only interruption in the greenish light of the forest, and she looked like an opal set in the green bosom of an emerald. Then the glow worms covered her entirely; her rags disappeared under an infinite profusion of precious stones, and the unfortunate girl, dressed with glow worms, sleeping ever so peacefully, as if touched by a divine death, seemed ready for some celestial ceremony, for a betrothal with God . . . And the glow worms descended upon her like tears from the stars. On her golden head shone blue and violet flashes, and in a little while her hands, her arms, her neck, her hair, were covered by a mountain of pure fire. The glow worms came in ever increasing numbers, as if the whole forest had been pulverized into light, falling on Mary's body and burying it in a magic tomb. Suddenly, with a start, the girl raised her head and opened her eyes, which were blinded by the light. The glow worms, startled by her movements, flew like flashes of many colored lightning . . . it seemed to Mary that in her sleep she had been carried away to the golden abyss of some star. She fell asleep again on the illumined surface of the Earth . . .

The silence of the night was broken by the first breezes, messengers of the dawn. The stars abandon the sky.

The glow worms, afraid of the new day, hide themselves in the secret of the forest and their last flashes, merging with the light of the dawn, form a blurred, colorless light. The birds begin to sing in the tree that shelters Mary, and from all the branches in the forest comes a musical note which fills the ears of the girl like the accents of an everlasting happiness. And the birds began to fly about, and everything was illumined with a different light, and noises started, and a heady perfume, concentrated during the night, permeated the awakening world. Abandoned by the glow worms, divested of her mysterious jewels, Mary woke up gently, and her sense of innocence, of perfect union with the Universe, were suddenly brought to an end by the violent awakening of her conscience. Her tireless memory reminded her of her agony. Mary recognized herself. Conscious of the dangers she had run in that solitude, she got up with a jump and started to run. As she crossed the forest, in spite of the terror with which it had inspired her, there remained in her memory a glow which came from the wonderful sight she had perceived in that marvelous night. As soon as she reached the open road, she found the sun, and its powerful rays completely destroyed the illusion of her dream.

The unfortunate girl walked for a couple of hours, passing vacant fields which increased her solitude, or valleys full of settlements which reminded her of her life of yesterday. With the dawn, work began in all the houses; shapes of women moved around the cows in the misty vapor of the pens; men were cutting up fire wood; children ran about the houses, and from all the chimneys issued smoke indicating that the people of the house,

oblivious to other people's hunger, were going to have their needs attended to. Mary continued to climb the hills up to the heights of Santa Theresa. When she reached the summit she felt still more timid, fearing to disturb with a vagabond's importunities the peacefulness of these busy, silent folks. Deeply feeling the shame of her humiliating condition, she directed her halting steps towards the inn.

A few travelers were taking their breakfast at the inn, which was the only hostelry in the little town. Mary stood at the door in an attitude of begging. The landlady, busy serving her guests, did not notice her, but her daughter, who was not so busy, came to the door to see what the girl wanted. In a humble voice, Mary said that she was hungry. The young woman asked her to come in, but suddenly, as if repenting of what she had done, she went over to speak to her mother. The landlady came to have a look at the wanderer, and when Mary told her that she was looking for shelter and work, the old woman asked.

"Have you any money?"

Mary, who had not thought about it, stood embarrassed without giving any answer. The old woman repeated her question. At last the girl confessed that she had nothing.

"Then, how do you expect me to give you something to eat?"

Mary was terrified and looked at the old woman with a vacant stare. The landlady asked her:

"What have you got in that bundle?"

Mary was opening the bundle to show her her clothes, when two of the travelers shouted for the landlady,

cursing her at the same time. The old woman turned on her heels, saying:

"All right. Go into the kitchen and I'll speak to you in a little while."

The girl went along the corridor without looking at the dining-room. In the kitchen she found a repulsive mass moving like a snail around a rough fire place made of mud. It was the servant of the inn. Mary felt nauseated. Without daring to sit down, she remained standing, stupefied with hunger, waiting for the food they were going to give her. The travelers departed and the landlady went to the kitchen. After examining what Mary had in the bundle, she said to her:

"You can have food and lodgings for two days for all these clothes."

And she took possession of the bundle while the girl looked on with complacent apathy. The landlady gave Mary a piece of bread and a mug of coffee. The poor wretch, starving as she was, ate her food ravenously.

Mary spent the whole day wandering about the town, and wherever she went she aroused curiosity and gave an impression of sadness which frightened the carefree inhabitants of the place. Nobody spoke to her, and the poor girl, absorbed in her thoughts, wandered about like an animal struck with the pest.

Sunk in misery, Mary was being quickly guided by another soul, more rudimentary, more primitive, which deadened all the manifestations of her former sensibility. And by noon time, she felt no shame whatever as she went from door to door asking for work. Nobody wanted her; they rejected her, pushed her away with an instinctive impulse of self-defense. Was she not the

repulsive phantom of poverty stalking through the peaceful city, through the happy, comfortable homes of these respectable people?

In the evening, when the sun was setting, the people sat at the doors of the houses, contented and carefree after their meal. Mary felt her solitude increase amidst the happiness of others. She walked along the main street of Santa Theresa and went to the very end of the town. But she had not the heart to abandon its depressing atmosphere. She went back.

On that first night, when it was time to retire at the inn, the landlady showed her a mattress on the floor of an evil-smelling room.

"This is your bed."

For a few moments she stood in the light of a miserable candle. The stench of the room sickened her, and in a swoon she fell on the rotten straw of the mattress. In a short while a human form entered the room and sat down on another heap of straw, opposite that on which Mary lay. It was the old servant. She took off her blouse and stood in her chemise and petticoats, displaying her terrible thinness, like a witch. Her straggling hair fell on her back; her eyes shone with flashes of madness. Startled by the harpy, the poor girl lay petrified on the straw, and with unspeakable nausea she saw her companion, in the dim light, thrust her hand into the filthy straw and pull out a piece of meat which she began to devour.

The two wretches did not speak to each other. But the eyes of the harpy lit up with hatred against the girl, for she looked upon her as an enemy, an intruder on the freedom of that filthy room, which to her was a temple

of liberty. Overcome by exhaustion, the old woman was not long in falling asleep on her straw. Mary listened to the heavings of that crooked body and to the beating of its big arteries, and an inexpressible fear prevented her from sleeping. The horrible room, the stench, the fear of the witch, everything conspired to keep her awake. And if she dozed, she could see the witch in a nightmare standing up, livid, satanic, stretching her skeleton hands to choke her. She awoke in terror, and, frozen by fear, moved her head towards the other, who continued to sleep.

In the middle of the night, when the house was in absolute silence, rats began to appear in the room. They ran madly about, squealing and sniffing; they careered over the body of the old woman as if she had been a corpse, and ate in her mattress the remains of the meat. Mary thought she was going mad with terror. The rats finished the meat and continued their tireless search through the room, going and coming from one side to the other, incessantly, restlessly. The candle began to go out and in its death struggle the room was now in light, now in the dark, until the flame died and everything was plunged into blackness . . . Mary, always awake, listened to the terrifying noise of the rodents, and almost dead with fear, she felt passing over her head a horrible vampire flying through the gloom . . .

The two days stipulated by the landlady passed without Mary being able to find work. Her humble requests were not listened to, and she became the laughing stock of the well-to-do, comfortable people of this corner of the world. The landlady told her to get out and Mary was panic-stricken at finding herself compelled again to

walk the roads without bread and without shelter. Bathed in tears, she threw herself at the old woman's feet begging to remain at the inn until she could find work. The landlady's daughter, moved by Mary's wretchedness, had the courage to interfere and the girl stayed at the inn as a servant, like the old woman. And so she lived at the inn for some days, miserable, wretched, but with the cursed desire for life which is our only support in adversity.

One morning, Milkau, who was on his way to Porto do Cachoeiro for some provisions, sat breakfasting quietly at the inn of Santa Theresa when he saw Mary, coming from the street, passing along the corridor. In spite of her wretched condition, Milkau recognized in her the girl with whom he had been talking at the dance at Jacob Muller's, and whom he had seen, in a happy moment, in the chapel at Jequitiba. He thought for a while, trying to explain to himself this new meeting. After some hesitation, he called the landlady and asked her who was the woman he had just seen.

"Ah!" exclaimed the landlady, "she is a vagabond whom I took in out of pity. I don't know where she comes from; she appeared here without a cent and cried so much that I let her stay . . . "

"And is she your servant now?"

"Servant? . . . That's a good one! . . . What she does for me is nothing compared to what I do for her. The best of it is that she is going away soon; nobody wants her here. That would be a fine thing! In the condition she is in, without a cent to her name, she would demoralise my house . . . She'll have to go to bed pretty soon too . . . "

The landlady's language upset Milkau's mind. He quickly ordered the landlady to call the girl, and the old woman went away to do as she was told. A few moments afterwards, the landlady came back pushing Mary in front of her. The poor girl, in her turn, recognized Milkau, and she felt an uncontrollable shame. When she saw Milkau she began to weep. Milkau stood up profoundly moved and tried to calm her. The landlady, astonished at the scene, began to say:

"That's the limit! Come on, you poor boob . . . They are trying to give you work and you stand there like a stick. I suppose you don't want to give up my board! . . . "

She stopped because some one was calling her from the kitchen, and away she went leaving Mary and Milkau alone. The kindly tone of Milkau's voice gave Mary confidence to tell him her misfortune. At times she felt shamefully embarrassed, but Milkau carefully avoided the most delicate and intimate points. Mary, however, seized by unexpected ardor, bared to him her whole miserable existence. And when Milkau had heard the whole of her story, he stood thinking deeply. It was the first time in his new life that he had been face to face with Misfortune . . . And at the moment of this meeting, all his long months of happiness, of resurrection, vanished from his mind. Sorrow overpowered him with its ruthless, desolating force, and Milkau's feelings galloped back to the past, sinking again into the gloomy period of suffering from which he thought he had freed himself for ever . . . Why should he not shut his ears, leaving behind the misery of others, and continue to enjoy his happiness? . . Had he not fled from human cruelty

abandoning the old, hateful society to begin life anew in the virginity of an immaculate world where peace must be inalterable? Why then did the spectre of misery pursue him even here?

Milkau meditated in profound discouragement. Mary looked at him serenely, waiting for him to speak. A long time passed in this sad silence.

"All right," said Milkau at last with radiant face, "there is a settlement where I can get you a job. It is the house of some friends of mine, at the Doce river . . . I am afraid, however, that you won't be able to stand the journey. It is a long way and you seem so tired . . . "

It was her salvation. Mary smiled with delight.

"Tired? Oh! no . . . I am ready to walk. You'll see that I won't get tired."

Then she added, thoughtfully:

"But, dear sir, weren't you going to Cachoeiro? Why do you give up your journey and return to Doce river? Is it just for my sake?"

"Never mind. That's nothing," answered Milkau without affectation. "As soon as I see you settled, I'll go back to Cachoeiro. To-morrow, without fail."

"But . . . "

"Come on," he said with gentle determination.

They called the landlady, and Milkau told her that the girl was going to go with him. The woman put on a mocking expression.

"Oh! . . . my dear sir. She isn't my daughter; you can have her any time you want. She is a vagabond . . . I don't care what happens to her . . . "

"Tell me one thing: how much should this poor girl

have paid you for her lodgings?" asked Milkau, without paying any attention to the old woman's impertinence.

She began to count on her fingers and asked for a ridiculous sum. Milkau made no objection and handed her the money.

"There is the money you ask."

The old woman received the notes with great astonishment and joy.

"Now," added Milkau, "I want you to give back to this girl the clothes she gave you in payment."

The landlady burst into a rage, as if she were being robbed.

"That's a fine one! Business is business! The clothes were a different matter!"

Milkau explained quietly that she would have to choose between the clothes and the money, and the old woman, thus pressed, preferred to keep the money and restore the articles which were of no use to her, and she went away, snarling and grumbling, to look for them. Mary followed her. When she returned to the dining-room, smiling and happy, she had changed her clothes and tied her hair with blue ribbon. Milkau smiled at her reviving femininity.

They went away. As they walked down the street, the landlady stood at the door shouting to the neighbors:

"Look at them. Isn't she lucky, the hussy . . . And that man, with the face of a saint! What shamelessness . . . "

When they left Santa Theresa and took the road to Timbuhy, Milkau recalled his first journey, with Lentz, when he was ecstatically traversing the forest to free himself from Evil . . . His journey to-day was a struggle

against suffering, against the hatred of men . . . But discarding the misgiving of an unavoidable disillusionment, his mind took a more hopeful view and he felt sure that this painful incident which had interrupted his happiness would quickly pass away. To-morrow, he thought, Mary will be happy again. Her repentant lover will come to look for her, and the wounds inflicted by pain will soon be healed by the gentle breath of kindness. . . . This thought made him happy, and forgetting the sadness and the miserable condition of his companion, he went along talking cheerfully to her.

They went up and down the hills under the burning sun, and during the first few hours Mary walked quickly in spite of all. But later on, she began to feel tired, and it was only with great difficulty that she could continue. They sat down under the trees, on the roadside. From the fertile regions came droves of donkeys, heavily loaded, going in the direction of Porto do Cachoeiro; travelers on foot and on horse back passed by, but no one stopped to take a rest, as they did. In the afternoon Milkau became restless, perceiving that it would be impossible for them to reach Doce river before night. He asked Mary to walk on until they should reach a settlement where they could spend the night. They walked on for a little while and saw a house on top of a hill. Milkau proposed that they should walk along the path which led to it, for perhaps they might find lodgings there. Mary made an effort and began to climb very slowly.

The settlement to which they directed their steps was a small European garden which broke the uniformity of the immigrants' dwellings. As they approached it, they

were more and more astonished by it. Down below there was a series of valleys of varying aspects. There were some low hills, enormous, dry, arid masses, black, bushy clumps of trees, precipices, fields, brooks, plantations, houses, everything in great profusion, with the wide, capricious lines of an extravagant landscape. The travelers contemplated the scenery with delight, and enjoyed the exquisite perfumes that came from the garden. When they arrived at the gate, Milkau clapped his hands. Some dogs came barking and running to the fence and an old man followed, trying to quiet them with his shouts.

"Shut up, you rascals! That's a fine way to receive visitors!"

The dogs ran away grumbling, and the old man spoke to the travelers, stroking his white beard and displaying his fine teeth in a broad smile. Milkau explained what had brought them to the house. The old man very kindly opened the door and invited them in with a spontaneous hospitable gesture. They went into the garden, which was in full bloom. The eye could not perceive any details. The impression they had was of an infinite conglomeration of colors. As far as the eye could see that wonderful tapestry displayed its rare and heavenly colors.

The old man showed them into the house and offered them something to eat. He served them at table and did everything he could for them. At the same time, he told them that he was a widower, that he had lived there alone for many years, that his daughters had married and that his sons lived in the neighborhood. He spent his time cultivating flowers; the coffee plantation

also took up some of his time, and from the window he pointed it out to them on a neighboring hill, as trim and neat as if it had been a garden. When the meal was finished the three of them went out into the garden. The colonist left them alone and went away to water his plants. Milkau stood admiring the skilled and youthful motions of the old man, then, followed by Mary he began to walk about the garden. She seemed never to have suffered at all; all traces of her misery had disappeared under her nomadic resignation. In a moment she forgot her agony. Now she was all admiration for Milkau, and with eyes fixed on him she humbly worshipped. Milkau found himself in this garden away from the exuberance of the tropics; the eternal greenness was interrupted, and the tragedy of the Brazilian nature had given way to the European peacefulness of flowers which had wandered to this place. The garden reminded Milkau of the country he had abandoned, and in his imagination he went back to old Germany. At this very hour, it was Springtime there . . . Everything was coming to life again from frozen death. He remembered the woods, the gardens, the houses, the people happy with the novelty of the kindly heat of the sun. And in the twilight, a shadow of nostalgia fell on Milkau's mind, pained, saddened by his sudden meeting with sorrow . . . Mary felt a little tired and unconsciously leant her hand on Milkau's shoulder. He felt the pressure of her hand like a fiery caress and the heat from her body reached his nerves, paralyzing them instantly. They walked about like two spectres, dumb, dreaming, their eyes lost in space. With the fall of day the perfume of the plants became stronger. As they passed along, absorbed in

their own thoughts, the butterflies rose from the plants like winged flowers . . . They walked up to the end of the garden, to a dry, barren spot where a palm tree stood like an evil, beautiful woman, exhausting the fertility of the soil . . . They sat down on a stone. Their eyes, after wandering through the valley and the rocky slopes of the hills, looked up to the sky and watched the setting sun. It was a fantastic scene. Without rays, without reverberation, the immense globe displayed a gradation of colors as if some magician within amused himself by illuminating it. The whole world stood still to watch the spectacle . . . The great actor descended through the cloudless sky; the colors on its surface continued to change in an infinite mutation, until at last it reached the horizon and the earth was bathed in blood, and its thousand nerves quivered . . . Night had fallen. The colonist finished his work and came up to his guests, inviting them to go into the house. They sat at table and talked without much interest until the old man, dead sleepy, suggested that they go to bed. He showed Milkau two contiguous rooms where he had prepared their beds.

The house was in deep silence and Milkau, without being able to sleep, listened to Mary's soft and measured breathing which reached his ears like a strange music. It excited and kept him awake . . .

He listened to her soft breathing and very gradually he felt a deep perturbation in his blood. Woman! . . . he thought. And the magic word awoke in him restrained and almost extinguished feelings of sensuality. Woman! And from the oblivion where they were buried rose lascivious and libidinous visions . . . Woman! . . . Crazed by these visions of voluptuousness, Milkau got

up shaking all over; his heart beat furiously, his throat was choking, his mouth was dry. He went to the half-opened door of Mary's room. He trembled still more, and a sudden lauguor gave him an instant of consciousness and caused him great vexation . . . The strong man stood ashamed of the moment of madness, and opening the window he meditated while contemplating the divine night . . . He cursed himself and felt ashamed of himself; he saw he was the toy of pleasure, and had lost faith in redemption . . .

Mary slept on quietly; her breathing kept reaching Milkau's ears and filled them with infinite pleasure . . . It was not the breathing of a sleeping person, it was the sighing of a lover under whose singing waves one feels the mystery of the instrument which charms you . . . The perfume of the garden upset everything . . . Milkau shook again, seized with voluptuousness . . . It was night, and love reigned supreme . . . At that hour came from the whole universe the echo of Love . . . He, alone, was dumb . . . And with his eyes, he tried to pierce the shadows that covered the world . . . Everything was illumined by the formidable power of his hallucination. And everything was a vision of love: mouths kissed each other feverishly, arms squeezed each other tightly, bodies mingled groaning with the frenzy of madness . . . The solitary man also loved . . . His blood, his young blood which had been frozen by illusion, thawed out in one instant, and warm and feverish, demanded a woman's body . . . Milkau left the tempting night and entered Mary's room. Her hair was loose and fell on her bare neck . . . Milkau felt the warmth from the feminine body, which pervaded the room, and thrust

his hand into Mary's soft, fair hair . . . And he stood dumb, shaking convulsively. Deranged by passion, he saw her hair shining, flowing over her body like a river of gold . . . For a few moments he stood near her body, unable to go any further, breathing so heavily that the girl woke up. With her eyes half opened, she asked:

"Is it time to start again?"

The innocent voice struck Milkau like an icy blast. He withdrew his hand, and quickly coming to himself, he fled, murmuring at the same time:

"No, no . . . Keep on sleeping. Lie down. It's nothing . . . "

He went back to the window. And for the changed man, the night was no longer the same as before; it expressed no longer those acts of voluptuousness, those fits of lasciviousness. It was serene and kind like the face of a sister. He remained there a long time, humbled, confused, repentant, and the breeze carried away the plaints of his sex agony, and the dew that the dawn poured on his brow to soothe him, was mixed with his lonely tears.

Early in the morning, when they left the house, the old man saw them to the garden door, smiling, with kindly malice, as people smile at sweethearts. Mary answered his good-bye without knowing what she was saying. Milkau felt an anguishing torture at his smile. then he raised his head and went haughtily away, as the conqueror of his own self.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE passage of misery through Milkau's new life left its disturbing traces. An absolute melancholy took hold of his mind, infinite, vague, weakening, and now his thoughts were constantly centered on discouragement . . . He could not forget Mary's misfortune. There is no suffering, ever so small, he thought, but it demands with the shouts of a thousand voices pity and reparation from the passers-by. No misfortune is small. All sorrow is immense.

And in order to drive away Sadness, who drew near and extended her arms lovingly towards him, Milkau gave himself up to work with more ardor than ever. At the time, the settlement already presented a beautiful and flowery aspect. All the lot was cultivated, and the coffee plants, which had grown up very strong, covered like a cloak the old sore left by the clearing of the land. The half-burned stumps had disappeared; the land looked like a green park, surrounded by the trees of the forest, scarcely interrupted by the plantation; the humble dwelling of the two immigrants was covered with creepers that burst out into flowers; and the little garden struck a note of perpetual gaiety in the tropics.

Milkau was a farmer by instinct, and his faculties of observation and imagination were zealously employed in the work of his own hands, which ennobled his human destiny. Lentz was the hunter. Confined to a narrow

circle of activity, his mind, always retrograde, sought expansion in that primitive and savage form of civilization. He hunted, he fought with wild beasts, he scoured the jungle, helped by some neighbors of his own inclinations, and in a few months the Brazilian jungle held no secrets for him. Though living under the same roof, the two men were the exponents of two entirely different cultures. One offered to the world warlike exploits, butcheries, bloody sacrifices; the other, a simple farmer, offered it fruits from the earth, flowers from his garden . . . But far from there being any hatred, any fratricidal strife between these two different interpreters of life, there was an attraction, a close union which represented the fast alliance between men, ever growing and which some day will become universal and indestructible.

Milkau worked on. And even when bending over his hoe, with his brow bathed in sweat and his nerves tired out, a sweet relaxation, a beneficial forgetfulness should have deadened his thoughts—even then the torture of pity, the continual presence of the misfortune of others, seemed a blot on his radiant vision.

"It is not in work that our salvation lies, nor can we find in it a stimulant for our drooping hearts. What is the use of tiring ourselves and soaking the earth with our sweat, of covering the ground with the flowers created by our industrious hands if there, in front of us, at our sides lives Pain; if all that blood, those flowers, those fruits are not balsam for the strange wound? . . . What good were the color, the perfume, the taste of things to Mary's hardships? How could her sufferings be cured? Did she not work night and day, like a convict? And did she derive any consolation from work? Oh no! there

is something else needed in this world. *Something else,* holier, sweeter, more powerful, more divine, more subtle, more comforting, more mysterious . . . LOVE! . . . " Thus thought Milkau, while his hoe, mechanically guided by his arms, continued to dig the earth.

He went several times to the settlement where Mary was working, to give her some comfort with his words. She became more and more absorbed in her own sorrow, and not even to Milkau would she confide the secrets of her martyrdom. Milkau respected her reticence, and without insisting on baring her heart, he begged the people of the house to be charitable with the unfortunate girl, to watch over her and not abandon her in the coming crisis. The colonists promised everything, but in reality they were not kindly inclined towards the girl; they treated the wretch with disdain, even with hatred, as if she had been an intruder who was going to rob them of their peace and increase their troubles and the expenses of the house. Mary did not complain. To her old sufferings had been added the dislike and the hatred of her new masters, but, in spite of all, tortured by the fear of the painful moment which was drawing near, she thankfully received the rare crumbs of human condescension which came her way.

At this time Milkau's life was being undermined by sadness. His companion also suffered, for outside of hunting, there was nothing in the settlement to excite his imagination. They worked during the day, silently absorbed in their own thoughts, and in the evening they wandered with slow uncertain steps to the neighboring houses. One of these walks led to a settlement which they had never seen before. There was an old man at

the door who invited them to sit down and rest a little. While the people of the house were busy with their domestic duties and looking after the animals, the two friends talked to the old man. They spoke of Germany, and he willingly told them stories from his own life. He was a veteran of the Prussian army and his memory was full of incidents of the last big war. Lentz was greatly interested by the details of these stories and the old man seemed self-satisfied and full of vanity at entertaining the two young men. In his narrative, he described strange cities, armies marched by, battles raged, cavalry rushed with fury, the oblique rain of shrapnel turned into bloody mud the miserable human dust swept into heroic clouds by the hurricane of Conquest. The old man ended his stories by telling them that once, in a scouting expedition, he had fallen off his horse and that as he lay on the ground, the horse of another soldier passed at full gallop over his chest. He lay on the ground for a long time, vomiting blood, and finally, by a mere chance, he was picked up and saved. Then he was discharged, and came to Brazil where the mild climate kept him alive . . . With these recollections he mixed episodes of the invasion, pictures of foreign culture which he had barely seen but which had become engraved on his retina, causing a marvelous sensation, such as that felt by a barbarian in the midst of civilization . . . The terror of discipline still frightened him. He was nearly executed because one December night, while he was in the garrison of a town in France, he demanded a blanket from the people with whom he was billeted. And that extortion, which was beyond what the regulations permitted, had almost cost him his life.

Lentz then praised that immortal Force, which commands and is feared . . . And he smiled as he had not smiled for a long time. The veteran stood up, puffed up with pride, and, limping along, took his neighbors into the house to show them old portraits of kings, views of Prussia, pictures of the war. Everything was old there; furniture, pictures and recollections. Everything there carried one back to the past.

On their way home Lentz said:

"What a great consolation I felt visiting that old man's house. It seemed for a moment that I had penetrated into Prussia's mighty past."

"But one mustn't love that past too much," observed Milkau.

"And why should I not love the glorious past of my people?" asked Lentz with a tone of emphatic superiority.

"Why? Because," answered Milkau, "what you love best in that way is precisely what is most humiliating and shameful. You love its destructive spirit, the devil which agitated it, its overbearing soul, slavery, war, blood, everything that separates and destroys . . . By and by our admiration for the past will dwindle until it disappears. Let us love the sacrifices made by human love, let us love science, let us love art . . . But the indiscriminating love for all that constitutes the past, for everything that was, is one of the most powerful agents of universal disruption. I hold that the study of antiquity and the prestige of the humanities are so many poisons which atrophy the human soul of to-day and lend an ever growing charm to the mystery of Authority . . . Those who place themselves in the past, those whose souls are artificially antiquated are the true

enemies of humankind, they are preachers of disruption, prophets of tedium and death."

"You know full well," interrupted Lentz, "that I don't love all the past, but I rejoice when I see in it a display of the strong human qualities of our country."

"And what benefit accrues from that force, from that greatness of our country?"

"Oh! What I worship in it is precisely its imperial tendencies, its warlike fibre, its universal expansion, its military genius, its discipline, its tenacity . . . "

"But what does that mean—our country?"

"Our country . . . well, Milkau, don't you know? It is our race, a peculiar civilization which speaks to our very blood, it is ourselves, it is what gives us standing in the world, it is the product of ourselves multiplied to infinity. Nobody can flee its atmosphere . . . It is immortal!"

"No, my dear Lentz, 'our country' is a transitory abstraction which is going to die . . . Nothing was ever founded upon it. Neither art, nor religion, nor science. Nothing, absolutely nothing has an elevated form so long as it is patriotic. Human genius is universal . . . A country is a secondary aspect of things, a political expression, it is disruption, war. A country is small, mean, it is a limitation to the love of men for each other, a restriction which we must break."

They went into the house, and for a great part of the night they kept on discussing those ideas. The following day, when Milkau was working all alone, he turned over in his head the discussion of the eve; he felt uneasy at the vivacity with which he had opposed his friend's ideas.

"There is no doubt," he thought ruefully, "that he is that way by nature. When two men stand face to face, an instinctive animosity rises between them, disturbing the sympathy they might feel for each other. It is the innate desire to subjugate, either by force, or by intellectual superiority or by the consciousness of one's own perfection. I am that way myself; I try to bring Lentz into my own way of thinking, to dominate his ideas and his whole being. Oh! damnable pride! When will our humility be really free from the least traces of sham, bitter vanity, pride, overbearingness?"

Milkau, humbled by an unconscious force, recognized that he was inferior to his own ideas. Then he returned to the same thoughts. He understood that the exaggerated love of country exhibited by his companion was perhaps a symptom of nostalgia, a longing for his native land. But was this not the painful result of a patriotic education? And from these thoughts he turned to himself, examining himself closely . . . He looked at the immense clear sky, shining like crystal, and felt like a stranger to himself . . . He admired the silhouette of the mountains, the blackness of the forest, the foliage of the trees . . . At his feet the earth was red, as if soaked in blood, and from the flowers rose a heavy, sickening perfume . . . The universe was at rest . . . And everything was strange to him. He and the World, he and everything else, a duality, an unavoidable distinction. 'I am not in thee, thou art not in me . . . Yet, I love thee, but thou art not I.'"

Weakened by a deep sorrow and seized with sadness, Milkau felt that he also was an exile . . . There was not between him and all the things that surrounded him the

subtle intimacy which unites them to us for ever, that makes every thing part of our own being . . . And he perceived with great discouragement that the tropical country, the land of the sun, left him ecstatically wandering about, unable to understand things, and incapable of a perfect communion, or a definite identification with the land . . .

"What am I, then? What worm, what miserable atom that cannot control itself, cannot love what it wishes to love, cannot identify itself with the other molecules of the world? What am I, that imperious, perverse laws rule me and overpower my blood?"

Other neighbors came some time afterwards to settle at the Doce river, in the land that lies between the jungle and the waters. It was a small Magyar family consisting of the father, who was a widower, two daughters and a son, and with them came a young fellow of the same race, who was the sweetheart of one of the girls, and a gypsy. They lived, closely united by discouragement and fear, in a little house made of rough timbers, with a straw roof, scorched by the sun on hot days, shaken by the winds and flooded by rain on stormy days. There they followed the ritual of their native customs. The cowardly pressure of fear made them cling to their old traditions which had been handed down unchanged from father to son and had been preserved through a religious fear of their ancestors. The gypsy came with them, impelled by his wandering instinct. On the long voyage, the eternal wanderer of the plains found himself a prisoner in the steamer, that seemed to him like a devilish, movable cage. From the shore, the ocean irresistibly attracted him with its immensity. At sea, he

no longer felt any moral freedom. The infinite is a torturing mirage into which human essence disappears . . . Amidst the limitless waters, surrounded by danger, assailed by terror, the mind, losing its vital forces in a continuous dissociation, transforms that impulsive, illusory attraction into a persistent impression of astonishment and terror, and the strip of land which it left behind and towards which it runs incessantly, receives its regretful moans. Man can only be master of his individuality in a part of space whose horizon he can measure with his eyes, in what is limited and finite . . .

At first they lived inactive, frightened at the perspective of the unknown, with their souls in suspense. The men scoured the neighborhood, hunted, wandered through the woods and visited the cities; the women stayed at home. When shadows began to fall, the gypsy lay down on the grass by the river side and with lazy eyes watched the dying sun. On Sundays the family gathered on the piazza. At one side sat the old man with his hat down to his eyes and his pipe in his mouth, stroking his long, yellow beard and the wrinkles of his face. The two girls and the lads, like real Magyars, decked themselves with the beautiful dresses of their native land, and gave themselves up to the great pleasure of her race, the dance.

Sometimes, in their walks along the bank of the river, Milkau and Lentz sat under a tree and watched these festivals in the silence of the great solitude. The gypsy was the musician, sitting with his inseparable fiddle beside the old man. At a signal the couples got ready and the Polish marches began. It was lively music.

The measures were slow at first, but they soon gained speed and the dancers moved rapidly. They made quick turns, formed graceful semicircles, entwined their arms around each other and gathered in groups of classical statuary. At the end of each dance they breathed satisfaction, and on their faces was writ the pride they felt in their mastery of the art. But the gypsy did not give them any rest; his violin continued to play and they again felt their passion nervously awaking.

With the fiddle under his chin, held by a tremulous hand, while the other worked the bow, the musician drew long, singing notes from his instrument. The men wore felt hats with pretty feathers, coats and knickerbockers of velvet, and long red sashes of silk round their waists. The women had bodices, open a little at the neck, which set off their full busts, and ornamented skirts of silk and velvet that covered their shapely forms. In the small space on the piazza, which almost hung over the great wild river, utterly alien to these melodies, the two races were united in a fraternity brought about by fate and art, the race that has an innate love of music and the race that has a passion for the dance. The artist dancers followed the madness of the violin in an almost imperceptible flight, onwards, always onwards, and with rare feeling improvised new figures. When they were at the height of pleasure, the younger of the girls, who had been nestled happily in her brother's arms, her face lit by a smile, went over to look at the beloved musician with her big velvety eyes shining with joy . . . When the music died down, the other sister, delighted and excited, her fair head leaning on her lover's shoulder, panted with

excitement through her half open blood-red mouth moistened with dew.

Felicissimo and his gang had gone to make new mensurations. After work, the surveyor used to come to Milkau's house to talk with them, and with his vivacity and happiness amused them very much by telling stories of his adventurous life and experiences in the north, in that tragic Ceara in whose thirsty, implacable sands the souls of men are tempered by resignation, pain, energy and hope . . . When there was nothing very important to do, Joca joined Lentz, and the two went hunting into the jungle. Living with these simple souls, Milkau managed to calm down the anxieties which troubled his mind. The spontaneity of the race, their courage and their kindness, brought him nearer to his dream . . .

Nothing disturbed the quiet life of the immigrants and the laborers until one morning, when the surveyor and his assistants were sitting at the door of the big shed, they saw a black shadow passing majestically through the clear sky.

"An *urubu!* . . ." exclaimed Felicissimo.

"Ah! . . . there must be dead meat around here . . . " observed Joca, watching the flight of the bird with his sharp eyes.

The great solitary bird was floating in space like a black-sailed ship . . . A little while afterwards it soared over the horizon, and in a short time many others like it appeared in the clear sky. They kept flying in a circle which gradually narrowed down while they descended to a certain point in the forest. The laborers, amused and curious, watched the evolutions of the filthy *urubus.*

"Look . . . over there . . . that's just where the 'sorcerer's' house is," said one of the men pointing in the direction of the house where dwelt the unsociable hunter.

"Maybe one of his pups died . . . Devil take them all . . . " grumbled the mulatto.

"To hell with them . . . The pests! . . . " added another one.

"And their master, too . . . "

"I don't think that any of his dogs died," said Felicissimo. "If one had died, he would have buried it like a son."

"That's right . . . and there would be no meat rotting."

"Perhaps the old man himself is dead," conjectured one of the laborers.

"Man, that must be it . . . " said one of the men. "I haven't seen him for days . . . "

"Neither have I," said several others in chorus.

"Let's go and see, boss," said Joca to the surveyor.

They all got up and walked in the direction of the hunter's dwelling. As they approached the house, they heard the barking and howling of dogs. When they sighted the house they saw the dogs barking and running like mad devils at the *urubus* that were trying to alight. The swarthy birds flew close to the ground, and when the dogs made for them, flew higher up and went to settle further away.

"Didn't I tell you? . . . The dead meat is the old man . . . " shouted one of the men, with a roar of laughter.

"What a stink! . . . This devil has been rotting here several days," yelled another one.

They all stood still instinctively, as if holding a council.

"Well, boss, what's to be done?" asked Joca of the surveyor.

"Come on, boys! . . . let's bury the old man . . . God forgive his soul . . . We'll take care of his body," said the surveyor with decision.

Inspired by the pious impulse of Felicissimo, the men did not hesitate one moment and started towards the house. When the dogs saw them coming, the whole pack abandoned the *urubus* and made for the men like one single mass, furious, terrible, thunderous. The *urubus* took advantage of the diversion, and walking along the yard, invaded the house in an infernal dance, screeching weirdly and shaking their hairless, harpy heads.

The men flew before the onset of the dogs and the defenders of the house stood at the yard gate howling, barking, showing their teeth and frothing at the mouth.

"How are we going to face that gang?" asked one of the laborers when they were out of danger.

"Joca, take some men with you and bring some of the iron rods. We'll teach those hounds a lesson," said Felicissimo, enjoying his revenge beforehand.

"Come on," said Joca, and he went away with two others.

The rest of the men stood throwing stones at the dogs who remained dauntless at the gate, barking and growling ferociously. The *urubus,* descending in large numbers from the air, continued their procession into the house. Even at that distance, the horrible and growing stench turned the men sick.

"Oh!" exclaimed the surveyor impatiently, while he

waited in the road for Joca's return. "Why is he taking such a long time?" And he kept on shouting:

"Give them hell, boys! Get more stones! Take good aim!"

The dogs howled, showing their sharp white teeth . . . The urubus continued to descend from the sky . . . At last Joca and the men came panting along the road, loaded with hoes, scythes and sticks. They armed themselves, and Felicissimo ordered enthusiastically:

"Onward, my boys!"

The men threw themselves furiously and resolutely on the gate, which gave way under their weight, leaving the road clear. The dogs stood their ground and jumped at the men, biting them desperately. The invaders yelled with pain:

"At them! At them!"

Sticks and scythes fell on the animals. For a moment the invaders were severely bitten by the dogs and blood was running from their wounds. At times a dog left the fight, howling with pain when a well-directed and furious blow broke his leg. Again, the men, scattered and isolated, fled along the yard followed by the dogs . . . The men finally got together, forming with their weapons a circle of defence.

"Don't give up!" shouted Felicissimo.

"Onward! Onward!"

"Push on! Push on!"

The dogs retreated before the energetic attack, and running away, they disappeared as if by magic. The men gave chase and entered the house brandishing their weapons . . . But sickened by the stench, they wavered, astonished at the horrible sight before their eyes. In

an inner court the *urubus* were eating the corpse of the lonely immigrant as it lay on the ground. They had picked its eyes out, opening up large, bloody cavities in its head. Engrossed in their satanic feast, the *urubus* paid no attention to the men and continued to pick and eat with avidity. The dogs, forgetting the *urubus,* turned on the men.

"Get away! Get away!" thundered Joca, crazy with rage.

Full of pity for the corpse, he went up to free it from the *urubus.* The dogs seized him by his legs and his clothes and stopped him . . . His friends ran to his help. At the noise of the struggle, the *urubus* abandoned their prey. Spreading their wings, they fanned the air, making the stench all the more intense, and, reluctant to leave the fœtid atmosphere, they flew heavily away to alight on the roof of the house. There they stood, funereal, horrible, witnessing the fight between men and dogs . . . When Joca managed to reach the corpse, the dogs redoubled their fury. They no longer were afraid of the irons and the blows, and attacked their enemies, who were taking possession of their dead master . . . It was a terrific struggle; men and dogs fought furiously, tearing each other to pieces, as if they were mad . . . The men were severely bitten and the hot blood ran down their naked, white legs . . . Howling, twisting themselves in a mad frenzy, the dogs threw themselves down and died on their master's body. After a long fight, some of the men managed to get hold of the corpse and began to take it outside while their comrades defended them fearlessly. Some of the dogs rushed at them, but they also were killed . . . The remainder did

not lose courage and attacked the men with renewed vigor. One of them stuck his tusks in the thigh of one of the men with such fury that, although the poor fellow tried to drive the animal away with an iron rod, he did not manage it. The dog drove his teeth more and more into the flesh . . . Another man ran to the rescue and with a well aimed and violent blow of a scythe he severed the head of the dog; the head remained stuck to the thigh of the man, and from several arteries the blood flowed in jets . . .

All the dogs had been killed. The yard was covered with dead bodies, torn to pieces, mutilated, with the members scattered in all directions. The men, sore, tired and wounded, deposited the old man on the ground. The *urubus* flew to the yard, advancing towards the corpse which the men were about to abandon through sheer exhaustion.

"Never!" shouted Felicissimo in a rage, "never! We must bury the old man first . . . Come on, you blackguards! Get busy with the hoes!"

The surveyor took a hoe himself and began to dig the grave. Several of the men obeyed him grumbling. Others stood driving the *urubus* away.

"Deeper!" shouted the surveyor, "otherwise the *urubus* will dig him out again It is a shame to see a helpless creature of God, without anyone to look after him, eaten by those swine . . . "

The grave was soon ready and they buried the immigrant hunter. Felicissimo knelt down and began to pray:—Our Father Who art in Heaven . . . Seized by strange and sudden pity, the rough men knelt down with their hats in their hands and began to pray, sad, oppressed

by death which now revealed itself to them. Then they filled up the grave without saying a word. As the corpse disappeared under the earth, the *urubus* rose one by one into the secret heights . . .

That same night, as the men of Felicissimo's gang were sitting at the door of the big shed, they heard coming from the forest frightful grunts which broke the soothing silence. It was a herd of wild boars that was passing by. But Joca explained it thus:

"There go the souls of the dogs, converted into *catitus,* to dig up the old devil and bring him back to life . . . "

And in that way a new myth was born at Doce river. And even to-day, when in stormy nights the *catitu* grunts in the forest, the people repair to the houses fearfully, thinking of the enchanted dogs . . .

In the dawn of a foggy day, the landscape lost its clear, distinct lines. All things became confused; the mountains thrust their heads into the clouds; the tops of the trees were covered with vapor; the river, limitless, without horizon, like a great greyish plate, was lost in the low, gloomy sky. The general design was lost, the profile of things became blurred, and from the shadows the colors issued with an effort. Everywhere there were magnificent stains. Over the greenish fields, one of those stains, slightly blue, moved to and fro, rose and fell, and was gradually disappearing. The sun was not long in coming out, nature shook itself, the fog vanished and the clear sky extended with marvelous limpidity. The moving stain in the fields assumed the profile of a poor horse, looking on the green grass with his old, sad, tired

eyes. As he moved along, his stiff, black lips pulled at the grass, chewing it half-heartedly while all his attention as an experienced horse was riveted on the door of a hut where his masters, the new Magyar colonists, were watching him closely. The swift light fog drew him from his attitude of humble curiosity, caressing his shabby coat with its cold blast. He shivered with pleasure, and stretching out his snout and opening his lips, gratefully kissed the air. But the fog passed on carried by the wind towards the mountain, as if it had been a subtle veil which concealed some wandering goddess. A ray of sunlight shone before his eyes, lighting up his pupils. Such are the caresses of nature.

One of the young Magyars walked up to the horse carrying a rope. The horse offered his head with a mixture of resignation and abandon. The lad placed the halter around his neck and took him to a post in front of the house and tied him to it. The colonists had decided to begin their planting that day and the old man gave the order to start for the clearing. The sons took some agricultural implements; the gypsy, shaking off his drowsiness, armed himself with a whip and went along with the others, who had untied the horse and had taken him with them. The girls, who had remained in the house full of instinctive terror, watched the group moving slowly away.

They arrived at the ditch that surrounded the clearing and was several feet wide. It looked like a long wound on the back of the earth. In the burned jungle, several trunks still stook up naked and black. Milkau and Lentz, who happened to be taking a walk, passed near the clearing and saw the group formed by their neighbors.

"That's good!" said Milkau. "They are going to start work. It disgusted me to see those people so apathetic and irresolute, idling away their time."

"But what the dickens are they doing dragging along that nag?" asked Lentz.

The two friends walked on, then stood at a distance watching the movements of the group.

The old colonist took the animal by the halter and led him to the ditch. The sons stood at his sides as solemn as if they had been at a religious ceremony. The father pulled the horse forward. The gypsy, with a whip in his hand, followed behind, and a furious lash, which rent the air like a sharp whistle, fell full on the back of the horse. The animal, pulling himself together, gave a jump. Several vigorous blows fell on his back. The horse stretched his neck forward, and lowered his body till his belly touched the ground, trying to avoid the blows. His legs were twisted with the excruciating pain of the punishment. On they dragged him ruthlessly, whipping him furiously. In that sacrifice they were performing a sacred rite; the new land was being united to the traditions of the old country. When their Tartar ancestors descended from the Asiatic plateaus, and in European soil renounced their wandering life as shepherds, to till the land and seek some satisfaction in life, they sacrificed to their gods the old companion of their peregrination through the steppes. And thus the inmolation of the horse became for their descendants a duty deep rooted in their souls.

The group continued to move on. The old man, like a priest, conducted his victim, followed by the gypsy in whose face appeared the infernal and terrible expression

of his ancestors in their passion for blood. The others watched the ceremony in silence. The whip vibrated incessantly; its iron-tipped tails cut the animal's back. The thin, cool air, penetrating through the wounds to the raw flesh caused him a sharp, excruciating pain. The sight and the smell of blood excited the gypsy more and more. He had become absolutely insensible to the torture he was inflicting on the horse and was seized by a murderous obsession. In his bloodthirsty passion, he never let the whip rest. The cuts became deeper; the blood flowed freely. In an agony of pain, the horse trailed himself along the ground, sprinkling the earth with his blood. Red drops spattered the lily-white head of the Magyar, who walked uncovered. His nostrils were dilated with pleasure. Heavy groans came from the animal's chest, and in his dying eyes were expressed his humble protests, his timid appeals for pity.

The whip cracked as the martyr marched on with his neck outstretched and his legs shaking, losing strength as the blood from the open veins flowed rapidly on to the ground. The gypsy, more terrible, more furious than ever, burst out into song, the war song of the old Tartars. The cruel whip marked the time of the curious tune. A sudden ardor seized the spectators of the sacrifice, and intoxicated by the music and the smell of blood, they began to sing in an infernal chorus. The poor animal fell heavily on one side. The inexorable whip made him get up again, and on the ground, as if it had been a veronica, the image of his body remained printed in blood. The song continued without interruption, ferocious, lugubrious, as if it had been the echo of the song of Death. The horse took a few steps, stumbling on, and finally he

dropped down. He was dying slowly, panting, struggling for air. On his cloudy pupils were imprinted by a last ray of light the figures of his executioners. And that horrible picture, which his eyes had perceived, was an infinite torture which would follow him beyond death, and would preside at the rotting of his martyred body.

The voices ceased. The men gathered around the carcass and began to pray like crazy ghosts. Puddles and threads of red covered the ditch. The layer of clay, smooth and slippery, like a plate of armor, made the earth impenetrable to the blood which evaporated in the sun. It was a refusal of the sacrifice, the rejection of the inmolation, breaking the cruel tradition of the ancestors. The new Land was making its own contribution to the clear ideals of the new men . . .

"And what's the use of it all?" asked Milkau, moved to tears. "Why that torture? Why that fecundation by blood when She, smiling and happy like a handsome young woman, would have given them her fruits, yielding to the sweet violence of love alone? . . . "

CHAPTER IX.

AND the inevitable happened . . . In the middle of the coffee plantation, which she was weeding, Mary, who since the previous evening had been suffering a good deal, felt an acute pain in her womb, as if she had been violently stabbed. She fell heavily to the ground, her body shook and her pale face was distorted by a horrible grimace. The pain was sharp and short and the girl soon came to herself again. She felt a terrible fear, and her first impulse was to go into the house and await there the end of the crisis. However, she felt afraid of her masters, who night and day threatened to send her away, to save themselves the trouble of attending to her. She braced herself up and continued to work under the coffee plants, alone in the silence of the day. The work did not go on very well; her benumbed hands let the hoe fall down and her shaky, swollen legs could not support her. From time to time the same pain came back, as if tearing her womb. Mary tried to ease the horrible pain by pressing down her hands. In the intervals she stood up and tried to work, pulling the weeds around the plants, but again she had to drop down, bathed in cold sweat. At times she felt an impulse to scream, and against her will, she cried aloud, calling for help. When she calmed down again, she was scared by her unconscious shouts and felt terrified at the idea that some one might come to help her. She knew

full well that any help from her masters would mean a greater torture for her, a greater vilification of her self, and probably it would mean being dismissed from that inhospitable home, which was a home none the less. The excruciating pain came oftener and oftener, and without any further hope, the poor wretch saw that the hour of maternity had arrived.

Seized by fear, she abandoned her work, and getting as far away from the house as possible, left the plantation and went to the river side, which was absolutely deserted. There the ground was wild and unbroken and the only trees in it were a few rachitic *cajueiros* scattered around. Mary sat down under one of these trees, which at the time were in bloom. The strong perfume went to her head and the poor girl, exhausted, laid down on the ground. Between the pains Mary looked indifferently around her and saw the light reflected by the river . . . Nothing was stirring in that solitude except a herd of swine who were coming towards her grunting and digging up roots with their snouts . . . Mary groaned freely, twisting herself in her agony. Her cries were sharp and strident, but at all times they sounded hoarse, as if her hysterical throat were being choked. Her womb was being torn under the pressure . . . Then the pain stopped again and a cold sweat bathed her body, which lay stiff, inert until her tortures shook it. The swine were getting closer and closer to her, and the poor wretch, without realizing anything, followed their slow movements with her eyes . . .

Always the same pains, but now they were more frequent, more piercing, with a sobbing cry that ended in a long spasm. She suffered terribly, her body trembled

with convulsions, her teeth chattered nervously, her rosy hands were clenched as strongly as if they were vises. She was in the greatest disorder; her loosened hair fell over her face in a tangle, her emaciated cheeks were tinged with blood; her dress was torn and it exposed her neck and her panting bosom. Suddenly she felt very faint, and it seemed to her that she was melting into a viscous, filthy fluid . . .

This was death surely. Oh! even worse than death . . . New pains came, deep and unbearable that gave her a strong desire to press something against her. Mary threw her arms around the trunk of the *cajueiro.* Her wild eyes could not see anything clearly. To her ears came the rough grunting of the pigs who were stirring the dried leaves of the *cajueiro,* and coming towards her attracted by the fœtid smell . . . And she clung to the tree, tightening her snow-white arms around the trunk and digging her teeth in it convulsively, desperately . . . Around her the pigs stirred the dry leaves of the *cajueiro,* and some of them, more daring and greedy than the rest, even came forward and stuck their snouts into the damp ground . . . Mary tried to scare them away, but she had not strength enough even to utter a sharp cry; she only groaned, struggling in a mixture of pain and joy which stimulated her in a strange fashion . . . And the sinister pigs closed in upon her menacingly . . . Suddenly she let go the tree and fell exhausted . . . The cry of a baby mingled with the grunts of the swine . . . The woman feebly attempted to take her son, but she was so weak that her arms refused to move. A sudden dizziness clouded her eyes and weakened her hearing, and feeling a voluptuous ease, she imagined that

she was floating in the air, away from the Earth, away from pain, and the grunting of the swine reached her as if it had been the far off lullaby of the murmuring sea . . . The thirsty swine grunted and snorted, fighting and pushing each other in the flowing blood. A new groan escaped from Mary's bosom as she woke up with a start. The pigs ran away frightened, and Mary, in a semi-conscious condition, sat up and looked in astonishment at the baby as it struggled, nearly choked. Then, when she felt a soothing emptiness in her womb, the pain stopped and Mary fell into another faint. The pigs, seeing her quiet, returned and fell upon the bloody membranes scattered on the ground. They devoured them ravenously, sucked the blood up, and carried away by their own voracity attacked the baby which, at the first bite, let out a cry and wakened its mother . . . When she opened her eyes, she got up with a jump and stood livid, stiff, hallucinated, watching her son carried away and torn to pieces by the pigs, as they ran along the field . . .

The daughter of her masters, who was looking for Mary, arrived at that moment, and seeing the horrible scene, without trying to find out what had happened, ran back to the house frightened to death and shouting that the wretched servant, in a fit of wickedness, had destroyed her own son.

Two days after, Mary lay in the jail of Cachoeiro.

The German population was horrified at the news of the crime; and the pillars of the colony, the rich merchants, the pastors, the landowners, united as one man, demanded vengeance and that an example be made of the culprit. One morning, before the hearing, Dr. Itapecuru was looking over some documents with the

lawyer Pantoja, and Dr. Brederodes was reading some of the political journals from the capital, when Robert Schultz, dressed in his Sunday clothes, came in very solemnly.

"Welcome to this house . . . " said the judge with servility.

The German saluted them with a kindly word for each, very suave and polite. They talked for a while about things in general, keeping up the conversation by fits and starts. Itapecuru suspected that Robert wanted to speak to him in private. What can it be? thought the judge. Something or other which he wants to ask, as usual. Or perhaps he wants me to settle my account. And Itapecuru, without knowing what they were talking about, smiled stupidly at the others. He dared not call the German aside, and made signs to the lawyer to remain. On his part the lawyer was full of curiosity at Robert's visit and was in no hurry to go away. "No, it can't be a question about the tribunals, otherwise he would not look so serious . . . With that air of importance . . . It must be the account." And the magistrate remained stupefied.

"My dear doctor," said Robert at last, tired of the conversation, "what brings me here . . . "

Itapecuru breathed. No, it was not the bill. Otherwise, how would he . . . before people . . . No, no, it was not the bill.

"Oh! my good friend, your wishes are orders for us. We are here to serve you. Isn't that so, Dr. Brederodes?"

The prosecutor muttered something and shrugged his shoulders. Then he added:

"It all depends . . . If it has to do with the law . . . "

"My dear sir, do you think for a minute that I would come to the court except on business of the greatest importance?" asked the German, smiling and placing his hand on the shoulder of the prosecutor, who blushed at the impertinent familiarity.

"Of course not," said Pantoja. "We are old friends and you have never asked us anything out of reason."

"Nor me either, captain," said Itapecuru, puffing his cheeks with a grotesque smile, which displaced his monocle.

"What's the matter, anyway?" asked the inquisitive Maracaja.

"My dear sirs, I come in the name of the colony, to ask that that wretch who murdered her son be punished. The crime is a horrible one, and the dignity of the Germans demands that the lesson be a severe one . . . "

"The colony knows," said Itapecuru gravely, "that there is always justice here. We will look into everything with the utmost care, as we always do in the performance of our duty."

"What we are afraid of is that some of you gentlemen may feel sorry for the criminal and . . . "

"Oh! Impossible! Justice is blind," said the judge, looking at the lawyer. "How is that affair getting along, captain?"

"Dr. Brederodes has drawn up the indictment to-day . . . I have already made the necessary arrangements for the trial."

"Well, then, my dear doctor and colleague, there is no question as to the guilt of the accused?" asked Itapecuru

of the prosecutor . . . "Pray, what do you know about the matter?"

Brederodes did not answer and continued to look at the journals.

"There can be no possible doubt about it . . . " observed Robert. "There are people who saw the thing and they affirm that she threw the child to the pigs . . . Besides, there are her antecedents . . . "

"Ah!"

"Yes . . . A worthless wench . . . Her son would have been an encumbrance to her. You understand . . . We must not have any such bad examples here. Just you imagine if your honors let the thing go unpunished, if we said nothing about the matter . . . What would in the future become of morality among the families of the colonists? . . . "

"But how could we let the thing go?" asked Brederodes dryly.

"Drawing up no indictment, making no arrests, not moving a step at all," suggested the German.

"You certainly have nerve . . . It's just as I say, captain. Mr. Schultz and his countrymen seem to think that we are their servants." And Brederodes thumped the table with his fist.

"Dr. Brederodes . . . "

"Doctor . . . "

The others tried to stem the young prosecutor's anger. However, he continued to vociferate, insulting the German, who tried to disarm the Brazilian's wrath with a cowardly smile.

"Yes, servants . . . Any damn fool can come here, because he has made some money, which he has stolen

from us, and demand in the name of the colony . . . What colony? . . . Demand that the law be carried out . . . That's a fine one!"

"But there is no objection . . . I believe my dear colleague, to the people . . . "

"People . . . nothing! Thieves, village bosses . . . Foreigners . . . The people!"

"What they seek is only justice!"

"Crooks! . . . Blackguards! . . . As they happened to catch one of their wenches red-handed, and they could do nothing else, they all start shouting for justice . . . That's a fine thing!"

"Our morality . . . " the German ventured to say.

"Morality . . . piffle! . . . Hypocrisy! They have the morality of highwaymen, who steal our lands and become rich!"

"Then you seem to think that there has been no crime in this case?" asked Pantoja in order to change the subject.

"No crime? Of course there is. Oh! . . . the wretch! I know her well," answered Brederodes ironically.

"Is she the one?" asked the Maracaja sarcastically.

"The very same one. She was very genteel and modest with me, but now we know what she really is. We'll settle our account now. I shall take the opportunity to unmask the whole of this gang. This is not an isolated case. I am sure all these German women kill their children . . . We shall see. Am I not the prosecutor? And they have the nerve to come to me and demand things. They'll soon find out who I am! . . . "

He could not shout any more for he was choking with

rage. He put on his hat, and shaking hands with Itapecuru, who wanted to detain him, he went away giving Robert a furious look. Robert's fat face expressed the deepest chagrin.

"He is a funny one!" said Pantoja when they were alone, desiring to dispel the bad impression made by the prosecutor's outburst.

"There he goes talking to himself and waving his arms. He is crazy! . . . He is too young," commented the lawyer, who was watching Brederodes from the window as he went along the street.

The German did not say one word. That was not the proper place for him to vent his feelings.

"The principal fault of the youth of to-day," said Dr. Itapecuru, swinging his monocle from his finger, "is their absolute lack of respect for the conservative elements of the country. They are plain revolutionists. They think that revolution means progress. I also admire the rights of man. I am a liberal, but, as a magistrate, I know how to give to each one what rightly belongs to him. *Suum cuique tribuere.*"

"That is the way of Justice," interposed the lawyer, who was getting tired of the speech.

"Yes, justice for all, old and young. How could society exist without order. It is the base of it. We must keep in mind the conservative element of the country. And right here in the colony, who constitute that salutary element?"

Nobody answered his question. Itapecuru smiled at the ignorance of his dumb audience, and continued:

"Who are that element? . . . The merchants, the landowners, the colonists, that is to say, the respectable

classes, those who have something to lose . . . And it is not by ill-treating them that you can have a perfect social organization. The Jacobins do not understand this admirable principle. Their only policy is to destroy, to knock things upside down. It is a great pity . . . "

Robert got up impatiently. The judge cut short his speech.

"Well, doctor, can I take back word to the colony that there is absolutely no chance of the criminal escaping punishment?"

"The colony knows that according to my theories . . " began Dr. Itapecuru.

But Robert did not wait for the rest. He made a great bow and went out. Pantoja followed him, walking like a cat.

"Oh! Mr. Pantoja! What about our documents?" asked the distressed judge, who hated to be left without an audience.

"Wait a minute! I'll be back in a little while," answered the lawyer without deigning to turn round, and he went away with Robert.

"Quite a boy, that prosecutor!" Robert said to the Maracaja in the street.

"A little bit crazy . . . "

"Crazy? He is a crook! I am going to write to Cachoeiro about him and raise hell with him."

"Now . . . now . . . " stuttered the embarrassed lawyer. "The dickens of it is that those Jacobins are very powerful . . . They all protect each other . . . Just like a brotherhood . . . And the governor will probably pay attention to them . . . "

"Donnerwetter!" exclaimed the German, and then he proceeded in the language of the country:

"I'll be damned! Those gentry always want our help at election time. In this colony alone we have five hundred votes. And when it comes to a case of punishing a criminal who is insulting us, they get out of it! . . "

"That's true, that's true enough. Listen, I shall write to the governor myself, secretly, asking at least that Brederodes be removed . . . It will be enough to have him removed . . . won't it?"

"Let him go to hell!"

"Yes . . . to hell," repeated the other mechanically.

"All right then, write . . . You are sure I can depend upon you?"

"Oh, my dear sir! you can always depend upon me. What would I not do for the party? But it must be in secret . . . Just between ourselves . . . You know . . . those Jacobins . . . "

"And what about the trial?" interrupted Robert, changing the subject. "Look here . . . there is an intense feeling about this business. Really, it is a monstrous case. The colony could not afford to overlook it. What would people say? That the German women of Cachoeiro are a bunch of wretches who throw their babies to the pigs . . . "

"Indeed, a serious matter. I understand . . . "

"As to the Jacobins you speak of . . . "

"Ah! politics . . . "

". . . they'll shout just as Mr. Brederodes shouted. Besides, our countrymen in the other colonies, in Itapemirim, in Benevides, everywhere would look down upon

us. It is absolutely necessary that an example should be made to keep them quiet."

"Don't worry about it any more. I give you my word that this thing will be carried out as you wish."

"What about the prosecutor?"

"Didn't you see him? With the idea of revenging himself on the colonist, and even through purely personal motives, he will prosecute to the bitter end. He is hard-headed . . . The judge . . . you know him . . . he is a fool and he is ours . . . "

"Yes. He is mine, I may say," exclaimed the merchant boastfully, slapping his trouser's pocket.

Pantoja smiled.

"As for the municipal judge . . . " continued the lawyer.

"That's right. He is a tricky gentleman, Dr. Maciel is."

"Never mind him . . . He is an imbecile. You've only got to shout at him and he is all right. Then we have Itapecuru and the witnesses . . . And myself . . . and I am the boy that pulls the wires," said the goat pompously.

"Yes, that's all right. Well, good-bye. Don't forget that letter."

Pantoja and the German separated, going in opposite directions. Suddenly the Maracaja turned round and shouted to the other:

"I was forgetting . . . "

Then, coming close to the German, he lowered his voice.

"I am in dire need of one hundred thousand *reis*. I must have them to-day . . . "

"Come round to my office."

"Thanks very much. It isn't for myself," he added hurriedly. "It is for the party funds . . . "

The jail of Porto do Cachoeiro, which formed part of the old city, dating from the period of colonization, was the oldest and meanest building in the city. Its walls were black, and the rusty iron railings in the windows fitted but loosely in their sockets. A corridor divided the building into halves: one was the jail proper, and the other served as residence for the only two soldiers who kept guard on the prisoners. The jailor seldom appeared at the prison. They had given him his position as payment for electoral services, of which he was master. The friendliest of camaraderies existed between prisoners and soldiers. The accused spent but a short time in the jail, just during the trial; after they were condemned they were sent to the prisons at the capital. But how the poor wretches suffered, almost without food, having to sleep on the wooden floor, without clothes, both sexes mingled like animals, exposed to cold and dampness and surrounded by the most unbelievable filth!

Mary did not understand very well why she had been arrested. Her mind was asleep and only from time to time did she have glimpses of what had taken place. Her memory reproduced the horrible picture which her eyes had seen once in a terrible agony . . . And she grew excited and burst into screeches of horror, crying, begging for help until a beneficent stupor deprived her again of consciousness . . . At other intervals, when she felt more calm, she suffered terribly, feeling oppressed by the weight of the whole world, and though she was weak and cowardly and half dead, her greatest torture

was a desperate anxiety she felt for her son, who had seemed very beautiful through the veil of her vertigo . . .

It was not very long before Milkau learned of Mary's fate. His kindly instinct and the crystalline clarity of his cloudless soul made him understand that behind the indictment there was a drama, a web of the cowardice, vengeance and stupidity, so common among men. He felt ashamed of being a man, he felt ashamed of himself, he felt a deep scorn for all that life meant . . . The painful moment had arrived when his divine dream was being destroyed by wickedness. Everything which he had taken as meaning kindliness, forgetfulness and peace was but the lowest expression of all the vices of society . . .

In the afternoon of the same day, Milkau said to Lentz:

"I am going to Cachoeiro for some time."

"And what takes you there?" asked his friend.

"Sympathy at the unfortunate fate of that poor girl . . . "

"And is that why you are leaving me? . . . You abandon your interests . . . our settlement?"

"It is my duty, as it is also yours, to help that girl."

"I don't understand you . . . " replied Lentz dryly, and he waited for an explanation.

"You don't understand?" asked Milkau calmly. "Then you don't see that that unfortunate girl is only a victim? And as she is a victim, I must hurry to her side."

"Who knows the truth?"

"Even if she were not innocent, should her crime not be blamed on those who sent her away and drove her to desperation?"

"But you have nothing to do with that affair . . . it seems to me . . . " replied Lentz.

"Every man has to do with such business, as long as there is suffering in the Universe."

He went away alone. When he arrived at Cachoeiro the following day, the little city no longer had for him the charm of the first morning, when he had hailed it as the daughter of the sun and of the waters. His own sadness communicated itself to the landscape and its old attractiveness had mysteriously disappeared. Hemmed in between two lines of hills, the city seemed to him buried alive and condemned to an everlasting anguish. The infernal sun pitilessly punished the houses, and the enormous rocks, bare and barren, lay burning under its rays. The river, almost dry, breaking on the shapeless black stones, hummed its monotonous song. Along the muddy, unpaved streets rose, looking towards the river, heterogeneous houses, built in a hurry,, without art, as if they had been for people who had just arrived in the land. They were small, shapeless dwellings, painfully plain, showing in their outlines the profiles of the grotesque figures of monsters. And there, in the embryonic and aborted city, the coarse, rude people had the brutish air of those whose life is tortured by cupidity . . . Nature in this place seemed sinister, tragic, soul-rending; humanity seemed mean and ridiculous.

Milkau's only desire was to see Mary immediately. He hesitated for a while, afraid that he might be mistaken as to the girl's innocence and that he might hear a lugubrious confession of her guilt. Agitated and

tremulous, he went to the jail, impelled by some confused and irresistible force.

At the door a young mulatto dressed as a soldier stood guard, with his tunic unbuttoned and without any weapons. Milkau asked permission to speak to the prisoner. The man, without even getting up from the threshold where he was sitting, showed the corridor with a lazy hand and pointed out to him the cell where the prisoner was. Milkau entered full of misgivings.

The window gratings did not allow full daylight to enter the cell, and in the dim light, Milkau saw Mary sitting on some boards which served her for a bed. Mary, frightened by the apparition, shook like a leaf, and neither of them could say a word for a few moments.

She bent her head with shame, not daring to look at the man, then, very pale, she began to beg for mercy. Milkau felt full of pity for the miserable woman. What had been graceful, attractive, sweetly feminine in the woman, had entirely vanished, and there remained only a miserable body and a livid face where two eyes sparkled with the fire of madness.

"You are suffering a terrible lot . . . aren't you?" asked Milkau, laying his hands gently on her head.

Mary felt through those hands and that voice a strange tenderness and kindliness which she had never experienced before. It was a subtle pleasure, and Mary, leaning over to receive his caress, wished that it would never end. And on the lips of the poor girl there appeared a smile, a humble and childish smile.

Milkau did not wait for her to speak. He went on, carried away by a deep sympathy which did not give him time to think about his words and his gestures.

"You suffer . . . I know . . . But this will end soon . . . You will be so happy in this world . . . So happy!"

He sat down on the only chair there was in the cell and took between his hands Mary's head. She let him caress her hair, twisted and tangled like a golden nest, and rested her forehead on his knees. Milkau could not see her face, but as he went on talking, he felt her sad tears . . .

"You must take care of yourself . . . Don't be downhearted . . . You are very thin . . . and ill. No . . . this will soon end . . . They will have pity on you. You shall leave here soon. And then you will be happy . . . "

Instinctively, he hesitated to accuse her. Why raise there the spectre of crime? She was gaining courage, and under the magic power of kindness her consciousness was coming back to her.

"Look. I will never abandon you," continued Milkau "and I will tell the others that you are innocent . . . Yes, they are to blame . . . They will forgive you, and they will confess their terrible crime. Because . . . Isn't it true that they are more to blame? . . . "

Mary shivered. Her tears dried up immediately. Milkau continued to speak, carried away by a delicious anxiety to comfort.

"It was in a moment of madness . . . It wasn't you, I know . . . It was madness . . . Abandoned, lost, you did not wish—poor girl—to see your little son suffer as you . . . "

The poor girl raised her head and staring at him fixedly, terrified, withdrew towards the end of the cell.

"No . . . no . . . " she murmured, panting.

"I am very sorry for you . . . Don't be afraid . . . " said Milkau trying to go near her.

"No . . . Go away . . . go away," she said, waving him away with her shaky hand.

"Poor wretch! Who remains to you if you reject me? . . "

"Go away . . . go away . . . Oh, my God!"

She clasped her hands frantically, then held her head tightly between them.

"No . . . I'll stay here to save you," Milkau said obstinately. "They will not pardon you . . . They will ask you to render an account of your son."

"My son . . . yes . . . my son . . . "

"Whom you killed."

"I?"

"You."

In his wild anxiety to wrench a confession from her, to know the whole truth, Milkau spoke as if in an hallucination.

"Yes . . . you . . . assassin . . . "

"No . . . My son . . . No . . . I don't remember well. They took him away to eat him . . . Oh! My God! It is horrible!"

Her sharp, cold eyes stared into Milkau's, and he, afraid, confused, remained silent. It was she who was speaking now.

"Assassin! My son! Oh! Why do you come to torture me in my misery? Oh! Leave me alone . . . leave me alone . . . "

Milkau's temporary wrath disappeared before the girl's despair, and he humbly repented of his unconscious outburst.

"Mary," he began in a low voice, "I ask you for the sake of all you love: tell me that you were mad, that you were not yourself when you killed your son. Do tell me that."

"Leave me alone . . . leave me alone," murmured the girl in a choking voice.

"No . . . I shall stay . . . I must stay. It is for your own good. You'll tell me everything."

Mary felt cowed by the energy with which he said these words. Her feeble spirit still attempted to struggle, but after a moment it gave in, vanquished by the superior mind.

"I want to know . . . I want to know," insisted Milkau.

The girl remained silent.

"Why didn't you send for me to help you when you found yourself abandoned and persecuted? Why? Didn't you have any confidence in me?"

"I was afraid . . . I felt ashamed . . . " she whispered in an almost imperceptible voice.

"Shame! for that . . . "

A sudden sadness seized him and he was silent and thoughtful for a moment.

"Human nature! Shame . . . you said . . . And is that why you killed your little son, you wretch? . . . Your own little son . . . "

"I haven't killed any one," shouted the poor girl with an effort.

"Don't deny it . . . They accuse you . . . "

"They are bad . . . "

"Well, who killed him? . . . Come on . . . answer me . . . " asked Milkau full of anguish.

"When it happened . . . I seemed to be very far away . . . I thought I was dying . . . "

"And then?"

"I heard his little voice near me . . . He was crying! My God! Then there was grunting of pigs around us . . . Then, they seized him . . . and they ran . . . eating . . . eating . . . "

These fragments of phrases were enough to enlighten Milkau, and the horrible scene was exactly reproduced in his imagination, sharpened as it was by sympathy. Then he called her to him, lovingly and tenderly.

"Come! Listen!"

At his voice, full of kindness, the girl went over to him. She leant over his knees again, and there, in the filthy and gloomy prison, the two lugubriously went over the fatal happening.

"You felt faint . . . You fell down senseless . . . "

"And the swine . . . "

"They came . . . The blood was running . . . "

"The baby . . . The baby . . . "

"It was crying at your feet."

"And the swine . . . "

"They carried it away . . . "

"My son!"

"You woke up and saw, away in the distance, your little son covered with blood . . . torn to pieces in the mouths of the pigs . . . "

"My son!"

"They asked you about him . . . They didn't listen to you. They accused you, they arrested you . . . "

"And now . . . I am accursed . . . in jail. There is nothing left for me . . . nothing . . . "

From that moment Milkau's life was transformed again. All the forces of his heart were devoted to Mary's defence and salvation. The preliminaries dragged along, and the trial was long in starting. Milkau did not neglect the poor unfortunate. He visited her repeatedly, and as she was the only prisoner, the guards allowed him to come into the prison as often as he wanted. Mary began to feel happy in her misery. There were long intervals when, charmed by the voice and the kindness of her friend, she entirely forgot her misfortune. For his own part, visiting her daily, he was delighted to explore her primitive soul, which was so rich in emotions. In their conversations, he used to tell her stories of his travels in his wandering life as a world pilgrim. She listened to him attentively, deeply interested in the deeds he had performed or wtinessed. Sometimes he spoke of the small cities of the Rhine, and then the legends turned up . . . They climbed the frozen Alps, and in their eyes shone the wonderful colors of the setting sun . . . Then came the big cities, tumultuous, pitiless, where there is hunger . . . Or they were at sea, gently pushed by the breezes or dragged along by the storms . . . There was also the Arctic sea, feebly lighted by the moon, with white ships magnified in the phosphorescence of the night, passing sinister by to smash against the icy barrier and sink, swallowed by the unfathomable waters . . . And she was like his shadow, always following him, always just behind . . . Sometimes he did not tell stories; he read her poems the sense of which she did not well understand, but at their music she trembled and cried copiously without knowing why . . .

In the city they began to take notice of Milkau. They

watched him through mere curiosity at first, then with a certain spite. The most unworthy conjectures were made about him, just as they would have been made in any other part of the world. They believed that Milkau was Mary's lover and their collective hatred did not spare the man, probably her accomplice, who was not forsaking the woman although she had killed his own son. They all avoided him. Even at Robert Schultz', and Robert was Milkau's purveyor for everything needed at the settlement, he was treated with scorn, but Milkau, strong and superior in his love, resigned himself to being the enemy of all. And so, when he did not visit the prison, he walked alone through the fields that surrounded the city.

In a few days Felicissimo arrived at Cachoeiro and stopped at the same hotel where Milkau was boarding. The surveyor, with his frank and kindly nature, did not share the prejudices of the citizens, and indifferent to them, he accompanied Milkau in his walks and observed with kindly interest his taciturnity.

Coming back from one of these silent excursions, they went one morning into the city and saw an unusual commotion in the principal street. The people at the doors of the shops and in the street, the drovers and the colonists, followed in great astonishment a group that moved along the street. It was Mary, accompanied by two soldiers, going to the trial. She was transfigured, and in the light of day, her paleness was cadaverous. Her eyes, fixed on the ground, were surrounded by two purple circles and her lips were bloodless and cold . . .

Milkau, dumb, deeply moved, allowed the procession to pass. It seemed to him the image of Innocence being

conducted to her martyrdom . . . And Mary gradually disappeared in the distance . . . Milkau left Felicissimo and ran to the court. The surveyor felt a great pity for him and did not attempt to detain him.

The first sitting was followed by several others, and Milkau attended them all. The witnesses testified unanimously against Mary. The web of falsehood was well woven, and unfortunately for Mary, she would not be able to tear it to pieces. Paul Maciel was the presiding judge and he conducted the trial intelligently and without prejudice. Milkau's constant presence at the sitting had made him a familiar figure in the court. Very often, after a sitting, Maciel took pleasure in talking to him. On his part, Milkau found that the municipal judge had a splendid nature and he grew to like him very soon. It certainly was not the position of the magistrate that attracted him. When Milkau was with another man, he felt as if they were in a desert; his mind eliminated all the distinctions invented by society and he instinctively disregarded position, means, family and race. He just saw a fellow being whom he approached sympathetically, often with respect when by his clear intelligence, the magnitude of his misfortune or his moral superiority had inspired him with that feeling. The days of his wearisome life in Cachoeiro were passing monotonously by, when one afternoon, as he was coming back from the jail, he met Felicissimo who was very much upset.

"A terrible misfortune! A terrible misfortune!" shouted the surveyor excitedly.

"What's the matter?" asked Milkau.

"A terrible misfortune! . . Little Fritz, Otto Bauer's

son, has just been flattened out by a wine-barrel in his father's store . . . "

"How horrible . . . Poor little chap! And where is he?"

"A little farther down," said Felicissimo. "I'm just coming back from calling the doctor."

"Come on, let us go down."

When they arrived the house was all upset. The news had spread and a crowd of people had gathered there, invading with the familiarity of compassion the room where the child was dying, stretched upon a table. The mother, still young, leant over the child, looking at it with the profound, dumb sorrow of an animal. The father wandered about the room, trembling and awe-struck by the misfortune. All around there were sobs and cries. From time to time little Fritz moved his arms, struggling with death. Through his little red mouth came bubbles of blood. His blue eyes could not hold them. His head was intact, but his thorax had been crushed in.

"Poor child!" exclaimed Milkau, feeling that death was at hand.

Behind him a voice asked:

"Couldn't you do something to save him?"

Milkau turned and saw Joca. He had the tragic air of a suffering satyr. The child was Joca's pet when he was in the city. His parents allowed him to take the child for a walk, entrusted it to his almost maternal care, and the goat felt crazy with joy when he carried him in his arms from store to store or when, like a nurse, he taught him to take his first steps in the street. Milkau felt deeply moved to see the face of that rude, primitive

man drenched with tears, and without the least hope he applied a few remedies. The doctor was not long in coming. He saw what had been done, and shaking his head, he murmured:

"That's all that could be done . . . There is nothing else left."

Little Fritz died in the horrible tortures of meningitis. During the night, sunk in deep meditations, they all silently watched the little corpse. Through the open window came the mournful moans of the waterfall. Gradually the oppressive silence and the exhaustion of their hearts overpowered them and they fell asleep. In the dim light of the funeral candles one could see the outline of the body of a little old woman, the boy's great-grandmother. She was a wizened, almost incorporeal person of vitreous transparence and all the life in her was concentrated in her small, clear eyes that shone with a sinister brilliance . . . Fritz' mother also closed her eyes and sleep overcame her as soon as her respiration became more regular, and the red color of her swollen cheeks disappeared until she was absolutely pale . . . Then her face took on an expression of calm and happiness. She was a beautiful woman, with abundant black hair and an elegant profile. Everything about her expressed health and strength, and sorrow came to her as an importunate and strange guest. Those who were awake and watched her felt a deep sorrow at seeing this young and beautiful mother turned towards her dead son and smiling in her sleep . . . From one of the walls of the room a picture of Our Lady, lit by a lamp, presided over the wake.

The Catholic family revealed itself. Milkau reflected

before the admirable symbol. He had the impression that all the cult was being devoted to the Virgin Mary. He remembered the cathedrals, the temples he had visited, and in all of them Her altars always attracted the hearts of the people more than the others, even those of Christ, which remained almost deserted. And why? Perhaps because of the greater sympathy between humankind and woman. And this universal tendency to deify, to exalt the goddesses, the women saints, did it not come from far, from very far, and was it not culminating now in the cult of Mary which was gradually extinguishing and absorbing all the other cults? . . .

Milkau spent the whole night trying to comfort the family. He also was sad and downhearted, and when he looked at the little corpse he thought:

"The death of a child is infinitely more sad than any other. We feel sad at the work that has not been finished, that has merely been attempted . . . that was going to be the completion of ourselves . . . Not to live . . . Those who die without having lived, those who are mere attempts at life, fill us with torturing pity. When a child dies we also die a little with it, for with it dies one of our illusions."

The funeral was the next day. All the people in the town, moved by the same spontaneous feeling, shared in the sorrow and made it universal.

The morning was bright, clear and blue. A band of musicians, joyous and noisy as in the burials of angels, accompanied the cortège as it moved along lugubriously. The misfortune had shocked the whole city, and mourning was general. The schools were closed and little children dressed in white lined the streets through which

the funeral passed. The stores closed and people came from everywhere to join the cortège; even the enemies and competitors of Fritz's father came bringing flowers, forgetting in the tragedy their hatreds.

The Brazilian authorities also attended the funeral—except Brederodes, who would not forgive the foreigner even in his hour of misfortune. The funeral went along the principal streets of the town in a mixture of sorrow, noise and joyful music. Among those who carried the coffin was Joca, who looked ecstatically at his beloved child lying there as if he had of his own accord jumped into the red and gold little casket to start his journey to Heaven . . .

When it reached the river, the funeral turned towards the jail, which was close to the cemetery. The lively and joyous music was the first to reach the prison, and Mary, who did not know what it was about, felt her soul refreshed by the immortal sound. Attracted by the music, Mary went over to the grating and began to look . . . The funeral advanced, martial and solemn . . . Mary watched it. Her anxious eyes looking through the iron bars, rested on the corpse . . . Even in death there passed the victory, the triumph of force and happiness . . . She could hear now, amid the harmony of sound, other voices, coarse, cavernous . . . They came from afar, from the unknown, but so persistent, so terrible that they drowned the voices of the instruments . . . And Mary, her sensibility excited by madness, heard and saw the funeral of her little son, carried away amidst the macabre music of the grunting swine . . . With face distorted, hair dishevelled and mouth shut tight by a

horrible contortion, she sat stiff, clutching the iron bars . . . Of the mob, the only one who looked at her was Milkau, who felt an infinite pity for her. The others, frightened or hateful, turned their eyes away from the figure of the poor wretch . . . The colony passed along united both in love and hatred.

CHAPTER X.

AFTER several sittings of the trial had taken place, Paul Maciel began to take Milkau to his house almost daily, and there, in the course of long and noble conversations, worthy of men, their friendship became more and more intimate. Maciel was a stranger in his own country and the moments he spent with Milkau were almost sacred for him, for they had the fine flavor of freedom. Never, since doubt had corrupted his soul, had he felt so happy and so bright.

"I don't see any way of avoiding a fatal ending to this trial," said the magistrate, answering a question by Milkau, after they had shut themselves up in his office.

"How is that? Are you perhaps convinced that Mary Perutz is guilty?" asked Milkau with misgiving.

"My friend, I am not convinced of anything at all . . . I am merely telling you that after the depositions of the witnesses and the proof presented, she must be found guilty and condemned . . . "

"But the witnesses have all been tampered with," interrupted Milkau. "They have been instructed to say certain things."

"You don't have to tell me that. That's always the way with us. There isn't one single trial where justice can be rendered. I am telling you this and I am a judge myself. What have my sentences got to do with the

truth of the facts? . . . Nothing . . . And don't think that I would not like to mend matters. But it is useless; when I receive all the documents connected with the trial, there is in them such a tissue of lies that I am forced to capitulate. It is most discouraging, isn't it?"

"It is horrible! . . . "

"A country without justice is not a country to live in: it is nothing but a conglomeration of barbarians . . ." affirmed Maciel, following his bent of talking in general terms.

"In Brazil there is no law," he continued, "and no one can feel safe. The trial is conducted in such a way that the accused has no chance. Listen, if a man tries to seize another man's property, he finds in our judicial system, in the way of conducting trials, all possible help to carry out his nefarious intention. And if that man be a magnate, nobody can bother him. No; not even I."

"Justice is but an illusion the world over," said Milkau.

"But in Brazil conditions are much worse than elsewhere, because it is not a case of rare eclipses of justice."

Milkau listened thoughtfully to the magistrate, who went on impelled by a desire to confess the faults of his country.

"This that we call a nation is nothing, I say. We did have here once a semblance of liberty and justice, but to-day all that has ended. This poor Brazil is but a corpse which is rapidly decomposing . . . The *urubus* are coming . . ."

"Where from?"

"From everywhere; from Europe, from the United States . . . It is a conquest . . ."

"I don't believe that," asserted Milkau.

"They will come. How could we live on in our present condition? Where is the moral foundation that shall support us abroad when here, at home, we are struggling in the greatest disorder and despair? What is happening to the country is that it is undergoing a character crisis. It hasn't one single fundamental virtue . . ."

"That is the character of the race," explained Milkau.

"Yes, my friend. Here the race is not distinguished by any prominent conservative virtue; there does not exist a common moral fund. I may add that there are no two Brazilians alike, and that, therefore, it would be futile to attempt to form an idea of the collective virtues and defects by judging merely by one of us. Which is our social virtue? Not even courage, the most rudimentary and instinctive of them all, is with us cultivated sanely and constantly, in a superior way. In this country, bravery is nothing more than a nervous impulse. Look at our wars! What cowardice is written in their history! . . . There was a time when our piety and our kindness were loudly proclaimed. Collectively, as a nation, we are bad, hysterically, uselessly bad . . . !"

He fell silent as if oppressed by his sad recollections. Milkau, feeling sorry for the tortures of his Brazilian soul, looked sympathetically at Maciel.

"See what happens to patriotism here," continued Maciel after a brief interval. "In Brazil the great mass of the people has no such feeling. Here there is a cosmopolitanism which is not the expression of a comprehensive and generous philosophy but is merely a symptom of moral inertia, an indication of the untimely loss of a feeling—patriotism—which would very well har-

monize with the backward state of our culture. You must notice that our patriots are all men of hatred and of blood, that is to say, they are savages."

"There is no doubt," assented Milkau, deeply interested in Maciel's frank analysis, "that there is a vast disparity between the different strata of the population. This lack of homogeneity is probably the cause of that instability . . ."

The judge reflected awhile, then leaning over the table, he looked at Milkau and spoke to him in a more decisive and vibrant tone.

"You are right. The Brazilian people, as a whole, offer an aspect at once of decrepitude and childishness. The decadence of our people presents a deplorable mixture of the savagery of the new-born races with the degeneracy of the races that are becoming exhausted. There is general confusion. The currents of immorality flow through our people without meeting obstacles in any of our institutions. Such a nation as ours is ready to receive the worst evil that can befall in the world: arbitrary and despotic governments. If society is a creation of suggestion, what can you expect of the feelings, the ideals of the uncultured masses when their imagination is being bewildered by the spectacle of the most brazen degradation in the governing classes? What reaction will not be caused in dull intellects by the scorn of those leaders for an ideal, for superior things, and their love for position and graft? And it isn't the government only. It is all of them: the subservient judiciary, ready to plunder private property, the public servants, the military, the clergy, all of them are sliding down a dangerous incline . . . "

He stood up nervously, opened the window and, absorbed in his own thoughts, looked at the waterfall. The soft light of the evening filled the room. Milkau, without moving from his seat, began to praise the beauties of nature.

Maciel turned around.

"It is a great advantage to live in the country in these fearful times. At least one can enjoy the peacefulness of the country and the love of one's family. For how long, I don't know . . . The climate . . . The pest has seized the miserable body of the nation . . . The family is being gradually destroyed by the imperious forces of vice."

He stopped, and as if resuming all his disappointments and all his anxieties, murmured with discouragement:

"My only wish is to get out of here, to exile myself, to leave the country and go with my people to live in some corner of Europe . . . Europe! . . . Europe! Yes, at least until the crisis is over. . ."

And when he was being carried away by his innermost feelings, Maciel restrained himself, became suddenly silent, and looked at the foreigner with his eyes red and wet with tears. Milkau spoke to him very kindly and his words fell fresh and soothing on the deserted fields of the Brazilian's heart.

"I don't wish in the least to contradict your words, but remember that there is no country without its disadvantages. The best of it is that nothing is fixed and everlasting; all is transient, things are always undergoing a crisis, trying incessantly new ways of existing. Besides, the terror we experience at present day happenings, is, to a certain extent, a matter of perspective

When we witness present events, everything appears great or ridiculous, terrible and formidable; everything seems to be going to an end in unavoidable degradation; but in the future, they diminish with the distance, appear normal and regular and we begin to praise them as ingenious and admirable expressions of the best times, which are always old times. Will you allow me to make a comparison? It is as if we were at sea, amidst the waves and the winds. The spectacle of the ocean fills our souls with terror, but after we have crossed it and we look at it from a distance, the undulation of the waves seems like a sweet smile."

Maciel smiled approvingly at the metaphor.

"Very well," he said brightening up suddenly, "but here we have a real storm . . ."

"It is natural. It could not be otherwise. From what I have observed and meditated, I am firmly convinced that it is due to the original formation of the country. From the very first, there were conquerors and vanquished under the form of masters and slaves. For two centuries the latter attempted to overpower the former. All the revolutions of Brazilian history signify a struggle between classes; the ruled against the ruling. The Brazilian nation was for many years neither more nor less than a nominal expression for a conglomeration of separate races and castes. And that state of affairs would continue, were it not that the powerful and imperious sensuality of the conquerors destroyed the barriers which separated them from the other races and formed that intermediate race of half-castes and mulattoes which is the link, the national tie, and which, increasing every day, has gradually gained possession of

their oppressors' strongholds . . . And when the army ceased to be the apanage of the white man and was dominated by the half-castes, the revolution was nothing more than the revenge of the oppressed who founded institutions which, due to their gravitational force, were destined to abide for some time in harmony with the psychological forces that created them. That shock was absolutely necessary to bring about what other means had not been able to accomplish for centuries: the formation of a nationality . . ."

"Great!" exclaimed Maciel enthusiastically. "Therein lies the explanation of the triumph and prestige of our own Maracaja."

"He is the representative of that class," said Milkau, laughing.

"I know very well that he is all that," said the judge. "It was necessary that out of our conflicting races there should emerge a half caste type which, adapting itself to its surroundings and possessing the average qualities of the other peoples, should vanquish and eliminate them all. That's right . . . And we must bear in mind that Pantoja is not an isolated case. Those who tend to govern us more acceptably, and with greater success than any others, belong to the same mulatto type. In fact, Brazil belongs to them . . . "

Paul Maciel paused for a moment and then, looking at his long, white hands, continued as he smiled ironically:

"There is no doubt about it . . . If I had a few drops of African blood, I would certainly not be here grumbling . . . I would be perfectly satisfied with the country . . . Pantoja, Brederodes . . . are they not progressing steadily and surely? . . . Are they not the

bosses of the country? . . . Why was I not born a mulatto? . . . "

The little world of the colony appeared in Milkau's mind as the lawyer gave this clear resumé of the whole country. All the natives that had any power there came invariably from the fusion of the races, while that young man, with finer intelligence, with greater and more refined sensibility, was vanquished, annihilated by the others. Was he right? Would everything have been right with him if he had had that drop of negro blood?

"You see, my friend, it is no use," said Maciel, in a casual manner. "There is no possible salvation for us. The race is incapable of being civilized . . . "

"Oh, no! You can deduct that from my words . . . The crisis here has been caused by the different stages of civilization of the several classes of society. They would have to attain an even degree of culture, as indeed they are beginning to do now. There are no races capable or incapable of civilization; history is nothing but a record of the fusion of races. Only stationary races, that is to say, races that do not become fused with others, be they white or black, always remain in a state of savagery. If there had not been a chance mixture of progressive peoples with backward ones, civilization would not have advanced in this world. And in Brazil, you may be sure, culture will flourish in the soil of the half-caste population, because there has been there that divine fusion which is the creative force. Nothing can hinder its progress, neither the pigment of the skin nor the coarseness of the hair. In a remote future, the period of the mulattoes will have passed, to be succeeded by the period of the new white people who have come in

the recent invasion, and they will accept with gratitude the patrimony of their half-caste predecessors, who will have built something, for nothing passes uselessly over the earth . . . "

"The country will soon be white," said Maciel with a sigh, "for it will be conquered by the armies of Europe."

Milkau said to the Brazilian:

"That Europe towards which you people turn your longing and dying eyes and which you love with your tired souls, hungry for happiness, culture, art, and life, that Europe also suffers from the malady which disintegrates and kills. Do not allow yourselves to be dazzled by her empty pomp, by the useless strength of her armies, by the perilous brilliance of her genius. Do not fear nor envy her. Like yourselves, she is deep in despair, eaten by hatred, devoured by separations. Even there the old and tremendous battle is being fought between masters and slaves . . . There is no rest for one's conscience, no tranquility for happiness when by your side somebody is dying of hunger . . . It is a moribund society; it is not the dreamed-of world which comes to life every day—always young, always beautiful. And to maintain such ruins, the governing classes arm men against men and feed the wolfish appetite they inherited from their ancestors, with the pillage from other nations. All that appears on the surface of life is not related to the foundation of life . . . The laws, coming from tainted sources to kill fruitful freedom, do not express the new rights of man; they are the shield of governments and of riches, and who says governments, says property, servitude, destruction. It is by such laws as these that peoples arrive at that excess of greatness

which is but the beginning of decadence. Through them everything becomes topsy-turvy, mankind seems to have no roots in the earth and passes by as if it were going to die, without caring at all for those who come behind. It is shaky, restless; it is at that critical moment when it does not possess the posthumous, the avenging justice which in the past struck terror into the minds of men, and does not practice that marvellous justice which to-morrow shall give every one his due.

"Nothing is in tune with the times. The spirit which died, still animates the world feebly . . . The races ceased from being warlike, and still they arm themselves . . . The peoples gave up religion, and still they preserve the temples of the priests . . . Art does not reflect the contemporary life nor soul. Poetry turns towards the past, and its feeble, mean language is not the powerful and refulgent mirror which reflects the image of the new men. And through that languishing, falling world passes the sensual, morbid and perfidious poison which destroys the strength of men and perverts the kindness of women's milk . . . Do not fear her, for she can't enslave you; before she can rise against you, she'll tear herself to pieces. Before long, her armies will not be able to move, for like those carbonized figures from the past which are dug up from the earth, a breath of wind will blow them into dust, and this beneficent wind which invades everything, which overcomes everything, like the sacred breath of the divinities of the future, is formed by the redeeming forces of science, industry, art, intelligence, hatred, love and a thousand more agencies yet unknown, mysterious and holy . . . Already those who despise them are seizing their positions."

"That is a great pity," said Maciel, in an almost inaudible voice.

"It is the first step towards an inestimable benefit. Let the army, the government, the judiciary, diplomacy, the centers of learning and all the other institutions which are bound to vanish, let them fall into the hands of those who think them instruments for evil, gross and ridiculous creations. Then the army will not move . . "

"And won't the country where that happens first be conquered by the others?" inquired the young Brazilian.

"If such a thing happens we must look upon it as a temporary and unimportant consequence which we should not mind in the least. The triumph of the conqueror in those inferior struggles will be momentary, for the resurrective forces communicate themselves invisibly through the men of our culture and lead to the same results in this planetary system in which Brazil, emerging from the original nebula, came to share our sacrifices, to undergo the same transformations and to dream the same dreams . . . "

When Milkau had gone, the judge, left alone, pondered over the wonderful vision of the world which was to be transfigured in its anxiety for new and more beautiful expressions of life . . . But in spite of the dazzling vision, the tribulations of the moment overcame him.

"Everything crumbles around me. Men do not understand each other in this country, and very soon I shall be an utter stranger to everything here, having nothing in common with my own countrymen . . . There is only left peacefulness of my family, the love of my wife, which comforts me, and our child who makes us young again, while around us everything is going to wreck and ruin."

Hearing no longer murmurs of conversation in her husband's office, Paul Maciel's wife came quietly in as was her wont every evening before supper. She was tall and thin and still very young. A sickly and diaphanous paleness, characteristic of Brazilian women, made her black eyes look large and bright. She sat down near her husband. Maciel, who was eternally fascinated by his wife, calmed down, and forgetting his tormenting thoughts, began to talk to her. Night came on, stretching her arms silently with mysterious tenderness, and they fell into each other's arms, lost in a chaste and subtle desire.

It was not long before tiny, hurried steps awoke them from their dream and the dishevelled figure of a girl came into the room. Her cheeks were burning, her little nostrils quivered, her hair was dishevelled, and cold persipration bathed her forehead. She ran into her mother's arms trembling and panting

"Mamma!" she said.

Her mother, surprised and worried, looking at her, though she could not see her in the darkness of the room, huddled her against her bosom.

"Gloria! Gloria!" she exclaimed.

Her husband seized the girl's head and kissed her.

"Calm yourselves!"

He said these words in a manly tone which brought tears of relief to the mother's eyes. Gloria buried her head in the sheltering bosom of her mother. The maid then came into the room and, full of excitement, she began to explain why the child was upset, telling them in a loud voice and with exaggerated gestures what had happened in the street. They were going along when a group of

immigrant beggars accosted them asking for alms. Some women of the gang stretched their bony hands to grab the jewels the child was wearing, and one of them, more daring than the others, kissed the girl while she was trying to pull off her bracelet. Her son tore off the ribbon from the girl's hair and ran away laughing. The maid tried to defend Gloria, using her parasol for the purpose, but her efforts were met with impudent sneers and jeers. If it had not been for two men who were passing and interfered, they would have had a bad time of it. They had managed to get away followed by the curses of the gang.

As she was telling the story, the maid took the girl's head in her hands and repeatedly kissed her eyes. Paul Maciel, in order to dispel her instinctive and unconquerable fear of beggars, tried to make fun of their meeting and laughed at her cowardice. The girl looked at him questioningly. Her fear gave her just appreciation of the facts and made his words useless.

They tried to amuse her and to draw her attention to pleasant things, for though only five years old, she possessed a precious and morbid imagination which affected her mind. Their inventive powers did not prove at that moment either happy or fertile. They lacked new ideas, they stumbled in their talk, they hesitated, and as a last resource they fell back on an argument that never fails: kisses.

The great calmness of the twilight quieted their minds, and only the child trembled, now and then, clinging to her mother, who gathered her up in her bosom and embraced her passionately.

"I'm afraid, mamma!"

She sobbed hysterically for a while and then fell into a broken sleep, clutching nervously her mother's arms. She woke up from a nightmare with an expression of terror and fatigue. She raised her head and looked at her parents with a faint and melancholy smile, expressing a rudimentary, unconscious anguish and the sadness of primitive and child souls. Her lips moved as if she were going to speak and her parents waited for her voice, suddenly relieved from their anxiety.

"Ah!" exclaimed Gloria, "we also were like them, eh, mamma?"

At first Maciel's wife did not grasp the whole meaning of the girl's thought, but it gradually dawned upon her and she stood petrified. Maciel fixed his sharp eyes on the child.

"Yes, mamma, a long time ago, far away, in another land. We were in the street all the time. We slept in the street. You carried me when I could not walk . . . Papa used to beat me a lot . . . "

Her face was transfigured by the recollections and with her eyes fixed on the sky she seemed to be looking for the days of the past.

"Do you remember when we didn't have anything to eat and we had to go begging? You used to nip me to make me cry and you used to push me into the stores to ask for something to eat . . . "

"Gloria," said Maciel, "what nonsense are you talking? Don't say those things . . . "

The girl turned her face towards him and remained quiet for a moment. There was a deep sigh and in a little while, as if she couldn't help it, she began again:

"Ah! how cold it was there. Here you don't shiver,

and there is no snow. Why is that, mamma? . . . Do you remember the hat you grabbed from a little boy in the street and gave to me? Oh! how they ran after us, didn't they, mamma? But we hid in that dark house and I stuck to the pretty hat . . . "

"Gloria! Gloria!" was all the young woman could say.

Paul Maciel got up excitedly, took the girl in his arms and showed her a picture which he hurriedly pulled from a drawer.

"How pretty!" exclaimed the girl delightedly. "Give it to me, papa!"

"I shall give it to you if you stop talking nonsense."

Gloria gave him a kiss. Could it be possible that her mind had gone back to the past? Maciel asked himself, and he placed the girl gently on the floor. The girl, however, did not pay much attention to the picture. She went back to her mother, who was sobbing.

"Don't cry, mamma. You have lots of money now . . . Nobody beats you now . . . Eh, papa?"

It was getting very dark. The maid was long in bringing the lamp. In the complete quietude of the house, amidst the shadows which were obliterating the last rays of light, the figure and the words of Gloria, were like the image and the voice of a horrible past appearing suddenly to spoil their happiness. And yet, Maciel felt an absurd and subtle intellectual pleasure in these gloomy visions of the child.

"You were not always as you are now, mamma beautiful and kind to me. I didn't have a doll, or a maid, or a bed even . . . I was always dirty. Wasn't I? You didn't have a pretty dress, or money, or rings . . . You had a bracelet which that young fellow gave

you . . . Papa was mad at you and he gave you a terrible beating, didn't he, mamma? . . . "

The poor woman felt upset and fancied her husband's eyes were moist with tears.

"The young fellow slept with us when papa was arrested by the soldiers. He gave me money and said that he was my father, but I wanted my own papa . . . Papa came back . . . you told him that he was a fool . . . but that woman told him everything . . . "

Paul raised his arms with an effort as does a man who tries to break away his fetters, and he made signs to silence the accursed and innocent little mouth, but all in vain.

"Mamma also bit a little girl's hand in the street, to pull away her ring. I saw it. Did you think I had not seen it? Now people don't bite other people. Papa, what happened to that man you wanted to kill with that long knife? . . . "

Suddenly she turned towards her mother.

"May I wear my pink dress to-morrow when I go out for a walk? Shall I take my big doll, Dulce? Shall I?"

The servant came into the room with a lighted lamp, murmuring some excuses for the delay.

"Emily, Emily, to-morrow . . . " shouted Gloria, running after her.

Paul Maciel's wife threw her arms round his neck and hung on to him. Clasped in each other's arms, awe-struck at the words of the child, they stood watching her as she ran after the servant. Their loving charity was gathering the bitter fruits of the land of Canaan. Despairing of ever having any children, they had opened

their hearts two years before to the little girl, who was the daughter of some Spanish immigrants. And now, from the gloomy and inexorable brain cells of the child rose, like punishment, a life, a past that did not belong to them.

CHAPTER XI.

LENTZ wandered along the banks of Doce river and his mind tormented by solitude, felt oppressed by the unalterable calmness of the earth. Above him stretched the clear, luminous sky; below was a dead world scorched by the sun. He wandered about, lonely and lost, and his eyes were attracted by the only thing that gave signs of life, by the murmuring waters of the river that glided along like a dying soul. The implacable beauty of the silence excited him and he cursed the impassibility of the universe which did not move nor tremble under the feet of the superman. In that conspiracy of silence, solitude, light, splendor and magnificence, the mind of man became delirious. And in that delirium, the origin of things vanished from the memory, the past had never existed. The beautiful forms of things, the softly moving waters, the silent and motionless trees, the sky, the sun, the hills, the clouds, everything was the expression of lives that have been extinguished, of beings that moved and had a soul and which now were forming a wonderful setting for the awakening of the first man. The new existence of the new forms was about to begin . . .

Lentz wondered at the surroundings in which his primitive eyes were opening. But the tedium of finding himself alone and wandering discouraged him, and his immortal and infinite spirit went back to immemorial

times. He shivered with sadness. And so, in that silent region, the desire to reproduce himself seized the strong man. The principle of life, the will to procreate, arose in him simple and overpowering. Lentz wished that his most intimate and essential forces should scatter themselves, divide themselves up into minute particles, like atoms of light that would mysteriously fertilize everything. Anxiously, restlessly, painfully he raved . . . and a perverse illusion unfolded to him his own image multiplied in a myriad bodies, handsome and noble like the children of a god. He admired ecstatically the eyes, the hair, the limbs, the glorious traits of his own race in which was concentrated the whole beauty and strength of the universe . . . And everything was beautiful, and everything was good, because everything was himself.

It was not long before he became tired of the unbearable monotony of seeing himself everywhere. In his despair, he wanted to go back to chaos, to destroy everything, to create new beings who would not be his own image, who would not be divine, who would moan and suffer and be human. The creator struggled with his own spirit, and his own spirit, with an unconquerable and diabolical force, vanquished him, creating always the same form, always himself. Himself . . . And the forms that came from the lonely and disdainful force followed him continually, tirelessly. From the summit of a hill where he had wandered, he ran, fleeing from the multitude of phantoms that followed him lovingly, like slaves, and which were himself, always himself . . . He went to the river side seeking salvation, with a queer desire to destroy himself, to find relief . . . and he

suddenly stopped. In the crystal of the waters, his own image appeared, ready to follow him even in death . . .

During the daytime, delirium followed him in a thousand terrible forms, burning his feeble, lonely soul. In the quiet of the night, when the terrors of the new life did not torture him, he wandered through the barren solitude of his mind, moaning cowardly. He begged for the gloomy company of the wind, and the wind did not answer his satanic summons. He tried in vain to revive with his ardent eyes the things that were sinking into death. The moon turned towards him its livid, cadaverous face . . .

A feeling of pity prompted Milkau to return to the settlement. During all that time he had not forgotten his companion, and when there was a halt in the trial, he went back to Doce river. It was in the early morning that he entered the yard, and when he saw the abandoned garden invaded by the ever watching jungle that always takes advantage of man's carelessness, he guessed everything. The house was open, and lying on the floor Lentz slept heavily.

They stayed together in the colony until the following day. Milkau's company raised Lentz' spirits and comforted him. And now, seized by an uncontrollable fear of solitude, he allowed himself to be guided by the universal instinct for comradeship and grew strongly attached to Milkau, who called him away to Cachoeiro to defend and console the suffering girl. A ray of light from Mary's martyrdom reached Lentz, and obeying that unconscious power against which he had struggled for so long, he bent down his head and followed his friend.

Along the road everything came to life, the wind, the

birds, the trees, all singing in their turn; and Lentz, recapitulating the short history of his disillusionment, said to himself:

"Ah! how I regret my audacious dreams, my old ambitions and desires . . . All that he and I wanted to have accomplished is absolutely nothing. We find in our road wretched and powerful pain, and it dominates and transforms us . . . "

"All the evil in him was the work of his imagination," reflected Milkau, looking at him with tender eyes. "But man is not governed by ideas; he is governed by feelings. The force of our individuality is nothing in comparison with the forces accumulated in life. What can one man do against the impetuous stream formed by the first tears, descending from the origins of the world, increasing in volume, flooding everything, destroying everything, until some day they will reach a high water mark of kindness and love? How can insignificant and useless man arrest the power or deviate the current of piety and sympathy?"

When they arrived at Cachoeiro they went immediately to the jail. During Milkau's absence Mary had become acquainted with a new kind of torture, that caused by sexual persecution. The whiteness of her skin, the strange form of a woman of another race, had excited the black soldiers. At first the wretched aspect of misfortune had overawed them and she was protected by a magic circle of respect. Gradually, however, their common life with the girl rendered them insensible to her misfortune, and a violent desire to possess her seized them. They tried to seduce her, communicating to her instinctively their own lasciviousness, but when they saw

her obstinately refuse their advances and break an old custom of the prison, where all the women prisoners became the mistresses of their guardians, they were enraged and attempted to subdue her by means of terror, cruelty and force. Her nights were agitated, trying to avoid violation by these drunken, lecherous soldiers. She struggled in their arms and escaped, thanks to the quarrels which arose between the assailants, or to the cries she raised, at sound of which the soldiers ran away frightened. In the day time they revenged themselves for the struggles of the night by making her work for them like a slave, by striking her and denying her food. And Milkau, in the dim light of the prison, noticed the terrible ravages caused by wretchedness in the body of the girl. He did not deceive himself as to the exact condition of the poor victim, although she smiled at him, making an effort to efface the terrible history of her martyrdom that was indelibly written in her hungry eyes, her emaciated cheeks, her skeleton hands and her sunken chest . . . Milkau felt a violent desire to seize her and take her away, far away, to some place where beasts would not have the shape of men . . .

Lentz was silent all the time they were in the prison. For the first time in his life he had been in a jail rubbing elbows with criminals and reprobates. His old, aristocratic soul shivered with nausea, and his overbearing and powerful mind, which had not become entirely subdued, rebelled at the contact with misery and tried to free itself from pity and charity and soar again in the heights of silence and power. But it was too late; the claw of pity held him down in this world, which thus became fertilized by his share of suffering.

When they left the jail, out in the street, Milkau heard, like an echo of his own thoughts, the words: "Poor woman! How sad life is!"

The new Lentz was speaking.

The two friends separated, deeply moved by the girl's tragedy. While Lentz returned to the filthy boarding house at Cachoeiro, Milkau wandered at random. His walk led him to the Queimado, the abandoned region where the old native culture formerly had flourished, and which he had crossed in the hopeful day when he arrived at the colony.

He went into the exhausted, dead fields. On the very ground which he trod could be seen the marks left by a generation vanquished and gone . . . All that had once been alive there, had entirely disappeared . . . Nothing was left but the remains of shapeless human habitations which stood petrified, painfully naked, with a few hardy and courageous creepers attempting to hide the shame of the mutilated ruins. In the lower hills, large stones like monstrous masks looked silently at the land beyond and at high and fertile mountains where the invaders were satisfying their hunger . . . Lost in the wide landscape, the Santa Maria, free from the rocks which had made it leap with life and happiness, flowed slowly, moaning with sadness . . . Everything was languid and empty, open and deserted . . . In a corner of a field a group of trees were slowly dying away. They belonged to other times and were the only life left there . . . Corpses of trees lay mouldering into dust, and others, still upright, were clothed in purple and gold by a glorious transformation. The impatient sun plunged into the loving arms of the future land and showed the Past its red, cold,

dead face . . . Sheltered from the winds, some goats, huddled against their kids, grazed lazily among the ruins . . . Flocks of birds passed through the pale sky seeking a shelter for the night . . . At such an hour, in the theatre of Anguish, Milkau meditated:

"No, sweet Sadness! I am not fleeing from you! You have revealed to me my own self. You have explained to me the energy and the strength of my thought. I recline upon you as if you were an unfathomable and voluptuous abyss. You attract me and I stretch my arms to you with that same sorrowful and invincible love with which sleep loves the past and death loves life. Before I knew you, a perfidious illusion numbed my senses and my frivolous existence was but the lugubrious march of a silent innocent along a road of sorrow. Even at that moment, I did not seek you, O, dying sun! In my face was stamped a fatiguing smile which kept me away from those men whose eternal happiness is death . . . But you, Sadness, were not far away. You sat down at my doorstep in an attitude of resignation and silence. And how you waited! One day, happiness, tired at last, disappeared and then struck for me the hour of peace and quiet. You came in. And how from the very first I loved the nobility of your figure! O Melancholy! my soul is the dwelling where you reign so sweetly!"

Milkau continued walking in the light of the last rays of the sun. There were no more flocks of birds in the sky. The sun had disappeared completely under the horizon. The breeze had died down . . . The feeble voice of the waterfall grew weaker and weaker. And Milkau meditated:

"Pain is kind, for it awakens in us our dead conscience. Pain is beautiful because it unites men. It is the unbreakable bond of universal solidarity. Pain is fertile, because it is the source of our development, the eternal creator of poetry, the force of art. Pain is religious, because it perfects us and explains to us our innate weaknesses.

"Sadness! you make me go down to the deepest roots of my mind. Through you I understand the anguish of life. Through you, who are the guide of human suffering, through you I make universal pain my own pain. Let not my face again be disfigured by the grimace of a tired and murderous smile. Give me your serenity, your serious and noble figure . . . Sadness, do not forsake me . . . Let not my mind be a prey to vain joy. Lean over me; cover me with your protecting veil . . . Lead me, oh most kind! to other men . . . Benevolent Sadness! Melancholy!"

CHAPTER XII.

"MARY!"

The poor wretch trembled, and with her stiff, outstretched hands she pushed away the face that was leaning over her. In the torture of the nightmare, it seemed to her that thick, red, thirsty lips were seeking her own mouth . . .

"Mary, it is I . . . " said Milkau.

She opened her eyes and remained dazzled. Her hand, now soft and relaxed, felt around nervously to make sure that the strange and sudden apparition was indeed her friend. Milkau felt her light, childish touch on his beard as if it had been a caress . . .

"Come on! Get up . . . " he said in a low firm voice, and pushed her hand gently aside.

Mary stood up and, taking his hand, she followed Milkau through the gloomy house. In the corridor they could see in the pale light of the night coming through the door—open, as usual—the figure of a soldier sleeping in a brutal attitude, like a coarse and archaic figure. The prisoner, alarmed at the sight, wanted to go back. Milkau seized her hands forcibly, and strong and calm, he passed with her by the sentry and took her into the night and freedom.

Outside, the subtle air that penetrated her warm, sleepy flesh, the crystalline sky, the brilliance of the stars and the immensity of space gave the fugitive a

delicious fainting feeling; she collapsed and fell into Milkau's arms, so that he had to drag her along.

Arm in arm they walked through the quiet, sleepy city. They went along slowly; her step was vacillating and her feet, numbed by her long confinement, stumbled on the loose stones of the street. An awesome silence filled her mind with the old fear, which is never extinguished. Now and again sleepy dogs woke up and barked furiously as the two figures went by. Then everything went back to the threatening silence which was brusquely broken by the voices of the pursuers coming from the alarmed houses . . . But they only could hear the eternal and monotonous screech of the water-fall. With redoubled caution they went along watching with eyes dilated by the darkness, the confused and sinister forms around them. Mary was trembling with fear, and Milkau whispered into her ear:

"Let us flee for ever from all that persecutes you. Let us go far away, to other men, to another land where kindness will flow spontaneously and abundantly, as the waters over the face of the earth. Come . . . we will climb those mountains of hope. Then rest in perpetual happiness . . . Come . . . Come . . . run . . . "

They left the city, and now, without fear of waking it, they began happily to ascend the mountain.

As they ascended, they lost sight of Cachoeiro, away at their feet, covered by the vaporous, greyish cloak of the fog over which the pale light of the night shone with the vague phosphorescence of a nebula . . And under that cloak they could discern fantastic, colossal, gigantic beings of shapes never dreamt of before . . . The Santa Maria, still and livid, cut like a smoking sword the plain

of Queimado, where the low hills appeared like mutilated corpses of some ancient heroes . . . Then they saw nothing. They continued climbing and entered the forest. Mary clung tightly to Milkau. There was a mournful murmur caused by the breeze among the trees of the forest. They went on fearfully, fixing their eyes in the impenetrable darkness whence came the mysterious clamor of suffering from the punished trees. And the implacable wind continued to blow, making them groan mournfully . . . Here and there, in the density of the darkness, a shaft of light came from above like a column raised from the ground to the sky, piercing the waving roof of the forest . . . Huddling to each other, breathing the air heavily laden with the heady and disturbing perfume of the nocturnal flowers, they walked swiftly along. Milkau repeated in his companion's ear his alluring appeal.

"It is happiness I promise you. She belongs to the earth, and we are bound to find her . . . When day comes we shall find other men, another world, and there . . . there we shall find happiness . . . Come . . . come . . . "

Thus he dispelled her terror, and Mary gained courage at hearing in his caressing voice the magic chorus of her betrothal with Happiness. They ascended swiftly, swiftly . . .

The road left the darkness of the forest and came out upon the open heights. It was stony and narrow and edged a precipice. Their steps slowed down. They continued to ascend cautiously, panting. Milkau's eyes fathomed the abyss and were fascinated by the silvery ribbon of the river . . . Mary could hardly walk, for she

was tired and her feet were sore, and she hung on to Milkau's arm, leaning heavily on him and warming his face with her feverish breath. They dragged themselves together towards the summit. The road was always at the edge of the precipices, and to the fugitives came, like an infernal hubbub away down in the bottom of the frightful valley, the roar of the Santa Maria. The valley became narrower and narrower until the two sides seemed to merge into each other in the black steep rocks, away in the horizon. Milkau lost courage at finding himself in the stony solitude. He was bathed in cold sweat, and his stiff tired body seemed to crumble down; and he fell and rolled towards the abyss and towards death . . . Mary, seized by sudden terror, seemed to gain some strange energy and held him back, dragging him towards the side of the mountain. He looked at her with wandering eyes, seized her by the waist and with a devilish and ferocious smile stuttered:

"There is nothing left . . . nothing left . . . Only, only . . . death . . ."

Mary struggled to disentangle herself from the powerful arms of the man and they fell on the ground together, fighting with each other in their madness . . The warmth from the woman's body, long forgotten, set Milkau's blood on fire, and in the struggle he squeezed her passionately against himself, kissing her feverishly. Mary embraced him closely in a sudden wakening of her womanhood . . . But the satanic temptation of death proved more powerful . . . The Santa Maria howled below, sombre and frightful . . . Milkau stood up with one jump, lifted the woman from the ground and advanced to the abyss . . . and then stopped. Her arms, tightly clasped

around him, held him back. For a long time they struggled at the edge of the precipice, but his strength, which desired to drag her to death, had to give in to hers, which struggled for life . . . Milkau weakened at last and dropped down on the ground, exhausted, overcome, and Mary freed herself from his arms. Finding herself free, she began to run along the stony path, livid, maddened with terror. Milkau, recovering himself, followed her and the two shadows moved through the fog along the edge of the precipice . . . They soon reached the summit and their astonished eyes gazed at the open fields towards which the road descended. Milkau's anguish vanished at the sight of the plain; the desperate and alluring roars of the river were dying behind; the black and awful abyss had disappeared as if it had been a nightmare, and now they were descending into the smooth fields softly lighted by the marvelous, clear night. They ran, they ran . . . Behind her Mary could hear Milkau's voice vibrating like the modulation of a hymn . . .

"On . . . On . . . Don't stop . . . I see it . . . Canaan! Canaan!" But the plain extended into the bosom of the night and lost itself in the sky. Milkau did not know whither they were going: the unknown attracted them with the powerful and magnetic force of Illusion. He began to feel the anguishing sensation of a race to the Infinite . . .

"Canaan! Canaan! . . . " he murmured, pleading with Night in his thoughts to show him the road to the Promised Land.

And all was silence and mystery . . . They ran . . . they ran . . . And the world seemed to have no end,

and the land of Love was sunk in an impenetrable fog . . . And Milkau, with unspeakable torture, began to see that nothing had changed; for hours and hours they had run and still nothing changed, nothing new appeared . . . They ran . . . they ran . . .

But before him there was a charming vision. It was Mary transfigured. The magic power of Fancy had transformed her and given her new life; the woman had covered with new flesh the bones she had borne as prisoner and martyr; new blood flowed victoriously through her arteries, setting them afire; her hair grew like a golden forest, spreading out and covering the world amorously; her eyes lighted the way, and Milkau, enveloped by that glorious light, followed ecstatically the shadow that was leading him on . . . They ran . . . they ran . . . And everything was immutable in the night. The fantastic figure kept ahead of him, swift and intangible, and he followed it in vain, unable to reach it, afraid that his voice might dispel the Illusion which he loved . . . "Canaan! Canaan!" he begged in his heart as the end of his martyrdom . . . But the longed-for land never appeared . . . Never . . . They ran . . . they ran . . .

The deceitful night retreated to its lair. The world was tired of its monotonous sameness. Milkau welcomed with a sigh of hope the delicious transition . . . At last Canaan was going to be revealed. The new light came and spread its rays over the plain. Milkau saw that it was empty, deserted, that the new men had not appeared there yet. With his discouraged hands he touched the Vision that was leading him. At the human contact, it stood still—and Mary turned toward him her

old emaciated face, the same dull eyes, the same withered mouth, the same martyr's figure.

Seeing her thus, in her pitiful reality, he said:

"Don't tire yourself in vain . . . Don't run . . . It is useless . . . The Promised Land which I was going to show you and which I was anxiously seeking, is not there at all . . . It does not exist yet. Let us stop here and wait for it to come with the blood of redeemed generations. Don't lose heart. Let us be faithful to the sweet illusion of the Mirage. He who lives an Ideal has a mortgage on Eternity . . . Each one of us, all of us, express the creative force of a utopia, and it is through ourselves, as if through a point of transition, that pain will make its sorrowful journey. Let us purify our bodies, we who live on the original evil, which is Violence . . . What charms most in life is the idea of perpetuity. We shall continue, extend our personalities infinitely and live for ages and ages in the souls of our descendants . . . Let us make of it the sacred vessel of our kindness, where we shall deposit all that is pure, holy and divine. Let us approach each other sweetly. All the evil is in Force, and Love alone can lead mankind . .

"All that you see, all the sacrifices, all the agonies, all the revolts, all the martyrdoms, are but different forms of wandering Freedom. And those desperate, anguishing expressions which disappear in the course of time, die only temporarily, awaiting the hour of resurrection . . . I don't know whether all life has an indestructible, eternal rhythm or whether it is shapeless and transitory . . . My eyes cannot reach the limits of the Infinite, my sight is limited to what surrounds you . . . But I tell you, if this is going to end so that the cycle of existence

may be repeated again elsewhere, or if some day we will be extinguished with the last wave of heat coming from the maternal bosom of the earth, or if we be smashed to pieces with it in the Universe and be scattered like dust on the roads of the heavens, let us not separate from each other in this attitude of hatred . . . I entreat you, you and your innumerable descendants, let us give up our destroying hatreds, let us reconcile ourselves with each other before the coming of Death . . . "

THE END.

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